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ABSTRACT

Adult participation in education and learning in the United Kingdom was examined through a Gallup survey of a stratified (by region and town size) national sample of 4,673 adults aged 17 years and over from England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Interviewers were given quotas for sex by respondents' age, class, and employment status. Interviewing took place January 24 to February 6, 1996. In Northern Ireland, a booster sample of 528 adults was interviewed to enable separate results for the first such surveys in the province. Of those regions surveyed, 23% of adults were currently enrolled in learning and an additional 17% had been enrolled in learning in the past 3 years. More men (25%) than women (21%) were currently learning. Key findings included the following: social class is a key predictor of participation; more than half of all upper and middle class respondents were current or recent learners versus only one-third of respondents from the skilled working class and one-fourth of those from the unskilled working class; employment status affects learning opportunities--unemployed and retired people have half the levels of participation of employed persons; length of initial education is the best single predictor of participation; and those with more initial education are more likely to participate in additional education. Information regarding respondents' future learning intentions, subjects of learning, place and length of study, qualifications earned, finance, attitudes toward learning, and reasons for nonparticipation were also collected. (Sixty-four tables/figures are included. The book contains 55 references. Appended are the following: technical information; notes on tables, guide to socioeconomic class; regions surveyed; analysis of weighted and unweighted samples; and the questionnaire.) (MN)

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THE LEARNING DIVIDE

a study of participation in adult learning in the United Kingdom

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NIACE

THE LEARNING DIVIDE

A report of the findings of a UK-wide survey on adult participation in education and learning carried out for NIACE, the national organisation for adult learning, by the Gallup Organisation

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with

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NIACE

THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR ADULT LEARNING

DfEE

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NIACE, the national organisation for adult learning, has a broad remit to promote lifelong learning opportunities for adults. NIACE works to develop increased participation in education and training, particularly for those who do not have easy access because of barriers of class, gender, age, race, language and culture, learning difficulties and disabilities, or insufficient financial resources.

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Foreword

The lesson of the survey reported in this study is stark. Whilst the United Kingdom may aspire to transform itself into a learning society in which all participate, the experience on the ground is that the learning divide is as marked today as it has ever been. Age, class, previous educational experience and where you live all affect access to learning, and the confidence to join in.

It is not a new lesson. It has been mapped clearly in a sequence of studies led by Naomi Sargant. Each study reveals a kaleidoscope of local change within which the overall picture is depressingly stable. To take just one example, older people are consistently shown to be marginalised and underrepresented among learners – yet I take hope from the findings in this study in the rapid increase in learning about computing among people in their sixties.

Taken with the range of qualitative studies led by Veronica McGivney and Jeannie Sutcliffe, which map barriers to participation and ways to overcome them for learners from underrepresented groups, Naomi Sargant's studies have given a focus to NIACE's core policy work – the search to secure more learning opportunities for adults, and access for different adults. They provide evidence for advocacy work, and a springboard for future research.

Who participates, and who does not, and why, are key questions for anyone working with adult learners, again as *The Learning Divide* makes clear. It is encouraging how far government has come to accept and recognise that, and NIACE is grateful for Department for Education and Employment and European Social Fund support for the project that led to the report, and to the Arts Council for sponsoring the arts and crafts dimension to the study. I am proud to have been involved in the work, and to have shared the enthusiasm and the arguments that led to its final shape. NIACE is grateful to John Field, Hywel Francis and Tom Schuller for their perspectives from Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland, to Jim Smith and Janet Rice of the DfEE, but most of all to Naomi Sargant, the principal author. We are also grateful to Gallup, for undertaking the survey, and to Helen Prew and Carolyn Bamborough for keeping the strands of a changing text together throughout.

Studies like this help to contest the invisibility of adult learning. They show there is a lot to celebrate, and that we all still have a long way to go to achieve the learning society.

Alan Tuckett

Key findings

1 *The Learning Divide* reports on a survey funded by the Department for Education and Employment, and carried out for NIACE, the national organisation for adult learning, by the Gallup Organisation. Between 24 January and 6 February 1996 4,673 adults aged 17 and over across the UK nations were interviewed.

2 In Northern Ireland a booster sample of 528 adults was interviewed to enable separate results to be analysed for the first such survey in the province.

3 The survey confirms that the UK still faces an enormous task in involving all its people in the learning society, and that the learning divide between the learning-rich and the learning-poor is growing.

Current participation

4 Nearly one-quarter (23%) of all adults say they are currently learning. A further 17% have been learning in the last three years. Three in five of all adults have not participated in the last 3 years.

5 More men (25%) than women (21%) are currently learning. Men also outnumber women when current and recent learners are taken together (43% against 38%).

6 Significantly more women (41%) than men (31%) report undertaking no learning since leaving full-time education. This is partially but not entirely accounted for by the higher proportion of older women in the population, and the lower levels of older people's participation (see 12 below).

7 Social class continues to be the key discriminator in understanding participation in learning. Over half of all upper and middle-class (AB) respondents are current or recent learners, compared with one-third of the skilled working class (C2) and one quarter of unskilled working class people and people on limited incomes (DE).

8 Almost twice as many white-collar workers, C1s, (32%) as C2s (17%) currently participate. A comparable NIACE survey in 1990 showed 31% of C1s currently studying and/or learning informally, and 21% among C2s. 42% of C2s and 53% of DEs have done no learning since completing full-time education.

9 Employment status affects people's opportunities for learning at work, provides resources to take up learning opportunities and, for many, the motivation to learn. Effectively half (49%) of full-time workers are current/recent learners, compared with 42% of part-time workers and 40% of unemployed people.

10 Those who are not working (23%) and retired people (20%) have almost half the levels of participation of people in work or seeking work.

11 The length of initial education continues to be the best single predictor of participation in adult learning. The more initial education and training people receive, the greater the likelihood of their learning later on. Only 20% of people leaving full-time education below the age of 16 are current/recent learners. 39% of people leaving at 16 or 17, and 59% of those leaving at 18 or later are current/recent learners.

12 Current and recent participation in learning is greatest among young people, and decreases with each successive age cohort – with 86% of 17-19 year olds; 43% of 35-44 year olds, 19% of 65-74 year olds, and 15% of the 75-plus population reporting current or recent participation.

13 Where people live has a major impact on whether they are likely to participate.

14 There are marked national differences in levels of participation. Overall 40% of the UK population are current/recent learners. The national totals are England 42%; Scotland 38%; Wales 37% and Northern Ireland 28%.

15 There are striking differences, too, in the English regions with Yorkshire and Humberside (52%) topping the list; and the East Midlands (50%), the North (45%), London (44%) and East Anglia enjoying the higher-than-average proportions of current/recent learners, and West Midlands (35%), and the North West (35%) having the lowest proportion.

Future learning intentions

16 Less than two in five adults (38%) say they are very or fairly likely to take up learning in the next three years.

17 More than half (55%) say that they are very or fairly unlikely to take up any learning in the future.

18 Recent experience of learning is a powerful influence on whether adults expect to study in the future. While nearly three-quarters (72%) of current learners and 59% of recent learners are likely to learn in the next three years, the figure drops to one quarter (26%) among past learners and 13% among non-learners.

19 81% of people who have done no learning since completing full-time education say they are unlikely to learn in the future.

20 Among people of working age, 54% of people who are not working, 51% of those working part-time, and 41% of unemployed people say they are unlikely to learn in the future.

21 Those regions and nations in the UK with the highest levels of current participation also have the highest proportion of the population intending to take up learning in the future. East Midlands (46%), London (44%), Northern (43%), East Anglia (41%) and Yorkshire (41%) all have higher than average intentions to participate in future.

22 People in Scotland (34%), Wales (30%) and Northern Ireland (30%) are markedly less likely to have plans for future study than in England (39%). Only the North West (32%) among English regions has such a small cohort planning future participation.

23 There is a rise overall of 5% in numbers intending to learn in future, in comparison with a similar survey in 1994. This rise is concentrated among people whose initial education continued to 18 or over.

24 The increase in the number of men planning future study is more marked from 29% in 1994 to 39% in this survey.

25 In contrast to the pattern of current and recent participation where participation among skilled manual workers is falling, there is an increase in the numbers of C2s planning future participation from 29% in 1994 to 34% in this survey.

Subjects of learning

26 Vocational, professional and work-related studies dominate the subjects adults are currently or recently studying.

27 Computer studies leads the list of the **main** subject of study, taken by 12% of the population, and of all subjects studied (17%).

28 Business administration is the second principal subject of study (9%), followed by social science and social work/care (7%); nursing/health studies (6%), and foreign languages (5%).

29 Over time there have been significant changes in the pattern of subjects studied. Compared with a 1980 survey computer studies has increased, and is no longer taken predominantly by men; shorthand/typing has virtually disappeared.

30 The study of all forms of engineering has dropped from 16% in 1980 to 7% in 1990, and to 4% in 1996, balanced by increases in professional, managerial and administrative areas.

31 Patterns of learning change across the life-cycle, but computer studies presents a special picture, with a peak among 35-44 year olds (22%) in mid-career, and a second peak among older people (21% 65-74; 16% 75+). The take-up of computer studies among older people is a new phenomenon and may be explained by people keeping up with grandchildren, and the increasing use of computers in voluntary organisations.

32 People of working age take a range of subjects heavily weighted to vocational outcomes. Creative arts, photography and other academic subjects are taken in great numbers by retired people (9%) and by unemployed people (7%). Retired people also take up other 'leisure' subjects (12%) in greater numbers.

33 The reasons for choosing the main subject of study, are work-related for almost half (48%) of all respondents, for 51% of men, and for a majority of learners between the ages of 25 and 54. Work-related reasons account for 16% of the choices made by learners over 75.

34 Just over a third (36%) choose what to study for personal development reasons. However, a majority of older learners (61% of 55-64s, 80% of 65-74s and 64% of 75+s) learn for personal development.

35 12% say they choose their subject to get a recognised qualification or to get on a future course.

Information and advice

36 Different age groups gain information about learning from different places.

37 The workplace is particularly important for 25-54s, with almost a third obtaining information about what to learn from the workplace.

38 Formal education and the careers service play a much bigger role for young people seeking information about what to study.

39 Informal sources are more important for older people with friends, work mates and family ranked highest, followed by newspaper advertisements, adult education and the public library.

Place of study

40 Universities (21%) and colleges (21%) are the most cited locations for learning undertaken, followed by the workplace (15%), learning at home informally (10%), and adult education centres (9%).

Length of study

41 42% of those surveyed have been learning their main subject for more than a year, and 8% for less than one month.

Qualifications

42 Two-thirds of all adults studying, and almost three-quarters (73%) of people of working age, are aiming for qualifications.

43 There is, however, a relatively low level of take-up of courses leading to NVQs, SVQs, GNVQs or GSVQs (12%).

44 72% of the overall sample hold educational qualifcations, with higher numbers among full-time (85%) and part-time (73%) workers than for unemployed people (68%) and others not working (62%).

Finance

45 Almost twice as many full-time as part-time employees get employer support for outside fees.

46 The highest proportion where fees are paid by the learners or by the learner's family are retired people (49%), those not working (46%), and those working part-time (46%), particularly women.

47 More women than men are in receipt of government or local authority grants.

48 Participating in learning incurs additional costs. 42% of current/recent learners mention equipment costs and 32% travel costs, but only 5% loss of wages, and 2% child care as significant cost factors involved in learning.

Travel

49 More than a quarter of current/recent learners do not have to travel to study because they learn either at home or at work. 15% travel up to a mile, 20% between 1 and 3 miles, 20% between 4 and 10 miles and 17% travel 11 or more miles.

50 Fewer people living in Scotland (20%) and Wales (13%) learn at home or work than for the UK as a whole.

51 Only a quarter (27%) spend more than half an hour travelling to their place of learning, and less than one in ten (9%) travel for 50 minutes or more.

Giving up early

52 Slightly more women (8%) than men (5%) give up before the end of courses. Pressure of work or job change (14%) and finance (13%) are the most often cited reasons, but for women pressure of family commitments (16%) is the major single reason for giving up before finishing the course.

Reasons for not taking up learning

53 Work and other time pressures are the main reasons for not taking up learning for 25-44 year olds.

54 Finance is the most important barrier for younger adults, particularly for 20-24s (20%).

55 Child care arrangements are a major barrier for 25-34 year olds. 16% of all women cite child care or care for other dependants as the barrier to joining in. This rises to 40% for people with children aged 0-4.

56 Nine in ten of those who say they have done no recent learning have clear reasons for not doing so, but less than a half of recent learners give any such reasons, and do not appear currently to place themselves outside the barriers to learning.

57 1 in 4 (25%) of people in their middle years, and 2 in 5 of people over 55, say they are generally not interested in learning.

58 More than a third (37%) of 65-74 year olds and almost a half (48%) of people 75 and over say they feel too old, too ill, or too disabled to take up new learning.

Personal circumstances and learning

59 Participation in adult learning can be related to major life changes and events. Wanting promotion at work (71%), moving house or home (59%) or involvement in a marriage or relationship breakdown (45%), losing a job, all relate to higher proportions of learning than in the population as a whole.

60 Almost half (48%) of those who 'want to help their children to learn' are themselves adult learners compared to 40% overall.

61 Among older people, those who have taken early retirement (33%) are learning at a higher rate than those who are not retired: the rate for non-retired 55-64 year-olds is 25% and for the retired is only 20%.

Attitudes to learning

62 More than nine in ten (93%) believe 'learning is something people do throughout their lives'.

63 Three out of four people are confident about learning new skills. This rises to over nine out of ten among current/recent learners, but is down to two-thirds among people with no past learning since leaving school.

64 72% believe people who get training find their jobs more interesting, and 7 in 10 believe that people who get trained end up with better promotion or better pay.

65 Nearly a half, and more of current learners, think that there is not enough help and advice about learning.

66 Of people of working age, a half do not see why they should pay for learning that is to do with their career, and a third do not think that they should have to learn for their job in their own time.

Future subjects for learning

67 Computer studies (11%) and foreign languages (11%) are the major single areas of study identified as subjects for future study. Apart from these areas adults' future learning interests are extremely diverse.

Use of leisure time

68 Physical sports including fishing and walking (39%) have taken over from reading (34%) as the main leisure activity adults report since 1990 when reading (51%) led physical sports (40%). For women reading remains the main pastime (40%).

69 The survey reports increasing use of public libraries, with 45% now reporting visiting the library at least once a month, compared with 33% in 1990.

70 Rising attendances are also reported for cinema (23% in 1996 against 15% in 1990), theatre (8% now against 6% in 1990) and attendance at a sports event (26% now against 21% in 1990).

71 9% of the population reports visiting a museum; and 8% visit art galleries at least once a month.

Appreciating particular arts and crafts

72 Film and video (26%) rank highest as the activity enjoyed by both men and women. Sewing comes next (20%): however, almost all those enjoying sewing are women (39%). Photography (19%), writing (15%), performing music/playing an instrument (13%), drawing (12%), painting (11%), singing (10%) and drama (8%) feature higher for ABC1s. Embroidery, knitting, dressmaking and dance among women and wood-work among older men involve people across the social spectrum.

Participation in arts and crafts

73 Of course, small numbers of people regularly take part in the arts and crafts than the numbers enjoying them. Activities taken part in are embroidery/sewing/knitting (16%), photography (13%), film and video (11%) and writing (11%). For young people playing a musical instrument is the single largest activity for 16-19s (22%).

74 The regional variations in regular participation in the arts and crafts parallel closely the reports of participation in learning more generally (see 13-15 above), with the East Midlands (71%) and Yorkshire (65%) topping the list.

75 Of those regularly practising arts and crafts, people taking sculpture (12.8%), pottery/ceramics (12%) and textile art/crafts (8.3%) are most likely to do studying for a qualification, except for students of arts/crafts other than the 20 most common, where 14.6% are likely to be seeking a qualification.

Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

76 The report also examines the reasons for the lower levels of participation in learning in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. A number of factors emerge, which feature across the three nations in varying ways: levels of long-term unemployment, less workplace-related learning and fewer perceived job opportunities which might act as a stimulus for learning. These variations give cause for concern and require further work.

Conclusion

Overall the study demonstrates that for adults a learning divide continues across the UK, which will need to be overcome if National Targets for Education and Training are to be achieved.

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Introduction

Lifelong or lifetime learning has finally come to the top of the political agenda, not just in the United Kingdom, but also in Europe with the declaration of 1996 as the European Year of Lifelong Learning, and not just for Government, but for all political parties. However, the UK still has a long way to go to fulfil the goal of becoming a learning society, nor do most people understand what is involved in this. National Targets for Education and Training, first proposed by the CBI in 1989, were agreed with the endorsement of Government in 1991. Revised in 1995, they command widespread support and have an ambitious overall aim and demanding lifetime learning targets for the year 2000.

Overall Aim

To improve the UK's international competitiveness by raising standards and attainment levels in education and training to world class levels through ensuring that:

1. All employers invest in employee development to achieve business success
2. All individuals have access to education and training opportunities, leading to recognised qualifications, which meet their needs and aspirations
3. All education and training develops self-reliance, flexibility and breadth, in particular through fostering competence in core skills

Targets for 2000 – Lifetime Learning

1. 60% of the workforce to be qualified to NVQ level 3, Advanced GNVQ or 2 GCE A level standard
2. 30% of the workforce to have a vocational, professional, management or academic qualification at NVQ level 4 or above
3. 70% of all organisations employing 200 or more employees, and 35% of those employing 50 or more, to be recognised as Investors in People

Yet, as Table 1 demonstrates, current achievement levels suggest that the UK will fail to achieve all three targets by the year 2000, unless a platform shift upwards can be secured in the next four years. Indeed, Lifetime Targets 1 and 2, which map individual achievement, show a worrying decline in the rate of improvement over the most recently reported year.

Table 1: Summary of UK progress towards the national targets

Description	Target for 2000	Autumn 1995 position	Increase since Autumn 1994 (% points)	Average annual rate of increase since Spring 1991 (% points)	Annual rate of increase required to reach target (% points)
Lifetime Target 1 Proportion of the workforce with NVQ level 3, Advanced GNVQ or 2 GCE A levels	60%	40.9%	0.5	2.3	3.8
Lifetime Target 2 Proportion of the workforce with NVQ level 4 or above	30%	23.9%	0.8	1.5	1.2
Lifetime Target 3 Organisations with 200 or more staff, recognised as Investors in People	70%	11.4%	5.4	2.3	12.3
Organisations with 50 or more staff, recognised as Investors in People	35%	4.6%	Data not available	0.9	6.4

(NACETT, 1996)

The National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets (NACETT) is concerned that no one body has overall responsibility for leading all this work, or for ensuring that the UK achieves the national targets for the year 2000. Peter Davis, its Chairman, has outlined six priorities for action, including all schools and colleges setting their own targets; further promotion of Investors in People by government, TECs, employers and Trade Unions; improving the system of NVQs and the accreditation of core skills; and the promotion of the message that 'education and training enhance job prospects, build better businesses and so improve our standard of living' (NACETT, 1996).

NACETT's figures focus on the labour force, while the survey reported on here covers the full range of the adult population. Yet the outcome is clear. Despite the greater political commitment to the construction of a learning society, there is a remarkable stability in the overall volume of participation in learning since the 1990 survey (Sargant, 1991). The report does map, however, quite dramatic differences in the pattern of regional participation levels, and shifts in the pattern of social class take up, particularly affecting white collar and skilled manual workers (C1s and C2s).

Part of the explanation of the overall stability and more localised variation may lie with the differential impact of changes in public policy and private sector practice, affecting different groups of adults and in different labour market areas. The complexity of social policy affecting

adult learners can be traced to the different priorities given to adult learning in labour market and educational planning. On the whole, adults were on the margins of national and local education policy planning in the 1970s and 1980s, whilst from 1981 the Manpower Services Commission and its successors gave increasing attention to the task of reskilling those people displaced by the labour market. A sequence of White Papers appeared in the 1980s, each followed by new measures to vary the diet of education, training and work experience offered to unemployed adults, and accompanied by an increasing government determination that individuals and employers should accept responsibility for the costs of this expansion.

Over the same time period, the number of apprenticeships offered in industry has declined, as has the proportion of the workforce engaged in manufacturing, industry, and in craft professions. New communication- and computer-based industries give a high priority to knowledge and skill development. There has been a growth in part-time and temporary employment, particularly in the service industries. Research shows, however, that only 70% of employers recognise a responsibility to offer training to part-time employees, and only 40% recognise the same responsibility for temporary staff (CBI, 1994). The increase in self-employment has added to the training challenge as few self-employed people find it easy to take time out for training or updating. Despite 15 years of policy intervention, it remains true that people are more likely to get training and staff development at work if they are employed full-time, are in senior or middle level positions, and are already relatively skilled.

More encouragement comes from the evidence of the gathering momentum behind the government's Investors in People programme. By March 1996, nearly 22,000 organisations were recognised as, or committed to, Investors in People, a total of some 24% of the population (Figure 1). This scheme is designed to include all employees in a company and not just its higher ranks, a structure which has proved valuable in encouraging employers to include employees with lower levels of skill needs.

Figure 1: Proportion of organisations in England and Wales with 50 or more, and 200 or more, employees committed to, or recognised as, Investors in People (March 1996)

The major educational initiatives to secure increased and widened participation in education derive from the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, which took further education colleges out of local authority control and placed them under the nationally-appointed Further Education Funding Council. The 1992 Act also ended the binary line in higher education, by redesignating polytechnics as universities, but created a new one in further education by separating the funding of courses leading to vocational and academic qualifications (including basic skills and ESOL courses) from general adult education courses. The Act was backed by a commitment to expand the further education sector by 25% over a three-year period, and to provide additional funds to that end. Adults have been major beneficiaries of this expansion. In September 1996, the Further Education Funding Council for England reported that adults (19 or over) accounted for 71% of the 3 million college sector enrolments. 14% of them were studying full-time. In addition, some 140,000 adults were studying in specialist designated institutions, and hundreds of thousands in provision commissioned from LEA and voluntary sector institutions.

A parallel growth in adult in higher education, and an increase in the diversity of participants, has been evident since the late 1980s. Among part-time students in higher education, adults are also in a clear majority, despite the financial disincentives to part-time study. Local education authority further and adult education has fared less well in the 1990s. Continuing pressures on the funding of local government, taken together with measures to decentralise LEA funds to schools, have combined to put LEA funding for non-mandatory sectors like adult education and the youth service under continuing restraint. A 1995 NIACE survey in England reported half of LEAs cutting budgets for uncertificated adult education in the first half of the 1990s. More surprisingly, half of the LEAs responding had maintained levels of service. Often this was the result of ingenious and flexible funding arrangements, with services drawing on economic regeneration budgets of local authorities, City Challenge and single regeneration budgets, joint care planning with Health and Social Services, housing budgets for work with tenants' groups, and a myriad of other local opportunities. Some LEA services have also maintained volume by certificating previously uncertificated courses, qualifying as a result for FEFC funding. The patterns of development are of course different in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and in Wales where unitary authorities took over in 1995.

While such arrangements may preserve the overall scale of provision, the current survey suggests the changes may have led to different groups benefiting. NIACE has been particularly concerned that older adults in particular may miss out as a result of the changes, not least because of the findings of the 1994 MORI survey, which showed an apparent drop in participation among older people. This study may suggest, however, that learners as well as providers show ingenuity in finding the opportunities for learning they seek.

The local authority role is not helped by current legislation. The duties and powers under which LEAs and the FEFC make provision for adults rest on a requirement to 'secure adequate facilities' for further education. For twenty years NIACE has argued that the interests of adult learners would be better served if the government could be persuaded to define 'adequacy'. Without

such a move, there continues to be wide variation in the range, quantity and quality of services available to adult learners. However, since the overall data available about such provision nationally are so poor, it is hard to bring sufficient attention to bear on the inequities that flow from these regional and local differences. Above all, where a person lives remains a major factor in their chance to learn.

The NTETs were required to meet the strategic priorities for action laid down in a Strategy for Skills (ED, 1991). The third of these priorities was particularly significant for these developments:

> Individuals must be persuaded that training pays and that they should take more responsibility for their own development.

This priority led after some years to the creation of a new department in TEED under the banner of 'Individual Commitment', the positive result of which was active encouragement within the Employment Department, now merged with the Department for Education and Employment, of the development of individual commitment strategies locally through TECs, and the commissioning of much new research which has provided valuable information for providers. Key examples of the research referred to later in this report are SCPR's *Individual Commitment to Learning* (1994) and IFF's six-TEC study on Individual Commitment (IFF, 1994). These studies have strengthened understanding of the stages involved[1] in the learning process and people's attitudes to education and learning, its importance to them and its relationship to employment. They have in turn fed back into the planning of this study.

A positive measure for adult learners has been the amalgamation of the Department for Education and the Employment Department in 1995. Already, in its Lifetime Learning policy framework, in its recognition of the importance of motivation and guidance, in its support for employee development schemes and for learning cities, there is evidence of a greater coherence in policy planning. The UK is better placed in its overall planning structures than many of its European partners to respond creatively to the challenges posed in Jacques Delors' White Paper, *Growth, Competitiveness and Employment* (EU, 1993). That report recognised that the same learning skills are required to foster individual fulfilment, community development and economic prosperity. The report also makes clear that in Europe, lifelong learning needs to contribute to two goals: the drive for economic prosperity and the need to combat social exclusion. However, while the UK now has a governmental structure able to respond to these challenges, the curriculum and funding divide in further education sits uneasily with Delors' holistic lifelong learning curriculum.

Mapping people's attitudes to learning is a key precursor to encouraging attitude change. It is necessary to match further understanding of the demand side with an understanding of how the supply of opportunities can be extended, how barriers to access can be reduced and information and guidance for potential learning can be improved. Many of these themes reappear and are

confirmed in the quantitative and qualitative research carried out for the RSA Campaign for Learning launched in April 1996. The main thrust of the RSA's campaign is marketing. They wish:

> to create a massive demand for learning and so boost Britain's competitiveness.

Both the RSA study and the IFF six-TEC study demonstrate a clear segmentation between different groups of adults in respect of their attitudes to learning, which assists in understanding demand. These findings are brought together in the final chapter of this report. They continue to challenge the nation in its policies and provision: paying lip service to lifelong learning is not enough. Action needs to follow on approval, not just by individuals but by society, if there is not to be an increasing learning divide between the information-rich and the information-poor.

The background to the research

The Learning Divide, a survey funded by the DfEE as a contribution to the 1996 European Year of Lifelong Learning, confirms that the UK still faces an enormous task in involving all of its people in the learning society. The survey was carried out for NIACE, the national organisation for adult learning, by the Gallup Organisation, which interviewed 4,673 adults aged 17 and over in all four UK nations between 24 January and 6 February, 1996. NIACE has had a long term commitment to mapping the pattern of adult participation in formal and informal education and training provision. In part, its focus on surveys of the general adult population has been a response to the poverty of data collected and held by a number of providers, particularly in less formal provision. In part, however, it has been in recognition that adults learn where they can, often fitting in to programmes designed for younger learners, and fitting study into a complex web of other demands on their time.

Earlier surveys reach back to 1936 when W. E. Williams, the Secretary of NIACE's predecessor, the British Institute of Adult Education, and A. E. Heath undertook a postal survey of the educational history of over 500 members of adult classes from the most varied occupations and areas (Williams and Heath, 1936). In 1953, Ernest Green reported on a postal survey entitled *Adult Education: why this apathy?* returned by almost 2,000 people, again mainly adult students (Green, 1957). Joseph Trenamen, Secretary of the BBC, undertook a related survey in 1955-7 researching attitudes of the general adult public in the London area to educational communications and ideas, linking these to people's access to sources of information and ideas, and to the ways those various sources combine to influence attitudes (Trenamen, 1957). The most comprehensive of the early surveys was commissioned by the DES in 1966 and carried out by the National Institute of Adult Education (NIACE's predecessor) under a steering group chaired by the then Minister, Christopher Chataway, and prepared and edited by Edward Hutchinson. While not a national sample, it assembled the result of 3,549 interviews with non-participants and participants in non-vocational adult education courses in seven local education authority areas in England and Wales.

The current survey is the fourth of a sequence of more obviously comparable national surveys, but the first one to include Northern Ireland, where a booster sample of 528 adults was interviewed. The recent sequence of surveys has been designed to look broadly at adult participation in education and training and has pursued a number of comparable themes, though the emphases have changed as the social, educational and policy environment has changed. The

first of these was entitled *Adults: their educational experience and needs* (ACACE,1982) and the second *Learning and 'leisure'* (NIACE,1991). The third study, for NIACE, was funded by the then Employment Department and focused more closely on adult education and local provision, *What price the learning society?* (NIACE/MORI,1994). Two other key studies were commissioned in 1989 and 1993 by the Employment Department focusing specifically on work-related vocational education and training and concentrating on those currently in the labour market aged 16-54. These were *Training in Britain* (IFF Research Ltd, 1989) and *Individual commitment to learning* (SCPR, 1994). Two further surveys are not discussed here, though they provide relevant background. *Employment in Britain* (PSI, 1993) was limited to vocational education or training among employees, and *Choosing to Learn* (Woodley *et al*, 1987) focused on adult learners in a wide variety of institutional contexts rather than on the general adult population. In addition, Naomi Sargant's *Learning for a Purpose* (NIACE, 1993), mapped out participation in education and training among the main minority ethnic groups, since the overall population surveys do not provide large enough samples of minority ethnic communities for further analysis.

The Basic Skills Agency (formerly ALBSU) has also undertaken regular surveys of skill levels and participation in literacy, numeracy, and of the need for provision of English for speakers of other languages.

NIACE's series of quantitative studies has also been complemented by qualitative research into the barriers affecting adults' access to learning opportunities, and into effective strategies for overcoming barriers. The seminal work in this sequence was Veronica McGivney's 1989 study, *Education's for Other People: Access to Education for Non-participant Adults*.

There are two main other distinguishing features of the NIACE research strategy: the need both to cover regional differences and provide more detailed analyses of sub-groups of the population; and the task of mapping the learning activities of the whole community and not just those active in the labour force. Both of these require a large sample size and it is the reconciliation of these purposes within the available funding which dictates the choice of research strategy, described in Appendix I.

It is always difficult to make comparisons between different surveys carried out by different organisations for different purposes, but these have been attempted wherever possible. In particular, in order to provide greater comparability in the critical issue of participation rates, the current survey has adopted the broader definition of learning developed by SCPR (1994) for its study. Previous NIACE surveys had followed the 1980 ACACE research, which had been designed at that time to include study in its broadest sense, whether full- or part-time, and whether at work or elsewhere, since the completion of full-time education. The 1990 survey, in addition, asked a question designed to elicit information about informal learning along the lines of the theories implicit in the work of Allen Tough (1971), and discussed in some detail in *Learning and 'leisure'* (Sargant, 1991).

The questions used in 1990 were:

> Are you studying currently, or have you done any kind of study, learning or practising part-time or full-time, at work or elsewhere since you completed your full-time education?
>
> Are you trying to learn about anything else at the moment, or trying to teach yourself anything, at work, home with friends or in a club – for example, cooking, how to use a computer, photography, etc?

The 1994 MORI survey adapted the first question slightly, asking about 'classes' rather than 'study' and did not add a supplementary question. Its phrasing was:

> Are you studying currently, or have you done any kinds of classes or learning part- or full-time since you completed your full-time education, either at work or elsewhere?

SCPR describes itself as taking

> 'NIACE's definition of learning as its starting-point,... (but that it then)... structured key questions on learning in a different way...respondents were given a more detailed description of what was meant by learning and were taken through this description in a more methodical and structured manner than was possible in the NIACE survey. Through this it was hoped that the respondents would have had more time to consider whether they had had undertaken any of the activities described as examples of learning'. (SCPR, 1994)

The question used in the 1993 survey by SCPR (SCPR, 1994), and by agreement adopted by NIACE for the current survey, reads as follows:

> This card describes the sorts of learning that people might do. Could you read the card please while I go through it with you. As the card says, learning can mean practising, studying or reading about something. It can also mean being taught, instructed or coached. This is so you can develop skills, knowledge, abilities or understanding of something. Learning can also be called education or training. You can do it regularly (each day or each month) or you can do it for a short period of time. It can be full- or part-time, done at home, at work, or in another place like a college. Learning does not have to lead to a qualification. We are interested in any learning you have done whether or not it is continuous. Have you done any kind of learning activity in the last three years?

Despite the use of the same question, the results of the surveys do appear to cover somewhat different territories, though to a lesser extent than in earlier surveys, and these differences will be discussed in more detail later. Of course, these surveys are three years apart in time. What is

imponderable is the effect of the focus of the SCPR survey on vocational and work-related learning compared with the more general perspective of adult learning taken by NIACE, and whether or not the difference in the way the questionnaire and the actual leading question were administered could have had an effect. A simpler issue relates to the comparison of the participation rates of the general adult population as a whole with that of the more educationally active labour-market age groups. To deal with this, it was decided to extend the age-range downwards to 16 as well as covering the top of the age-range in order to enable comparisons to be made not only with the previous series of surveys but also with the SCPR (1994) survey.

The key differences, which are discussed in more detail at appropriate stages in this report, are that, compared with the current survey, the SCPR survey records

- a higher proportion of shorter learning episodes
- a lower proportion of women participating than men
- related to these, there are fewer 'women's' subjects mentioned
- fewer learners are aiming at qualifications, particularly GCSEs, A Levels and undergraduate degrees and diplomas
- traditional vocational qualifications are level but the proportion aiming at NVQs and GNVQs is higher in 1996
- a higher proportion have no fees to pay (30% compared with 25%)
- and a higher proportion have been funded by their employer (44% compared with 20%).

The SCPR survey was designed to focus on work-related learning, but did also use the broad question described. It clearly has picked up more short work-related episodes apparently omitted from the NIACE surveys. At the same time, many people learning for longer periods in the NIACE survey are also studying for work-related reasons, and may have been missed out of the SCPR survey. The conclusion may well be that both surveys underestimate the total quantity of current learning. Certainly the attempt to separate work-related learning from other forms of learning continues to cause statistical and inferential difficulties, particularly in respect of future intentions to learn.

A full set of analyses has been carried out for both the labour market (16-54 age groups) and the national population, enabling comparisons to be made both between the groups and with other surveys as appropriate. The figures used in the analyses are from the weighted samples. Details of both samples are given in Appendix V. Further descriptions of definitions and methodology will be found in the Appendices. In the discussion of the findings which follow, the NIACE surveys will be identified by their year, and other surveys by their research organisation in order to tie in with the references.

Current and recent participation

Current and recent participation in learning as measured by the 1996 survey

The critical issue is the current level of participation in education and training. How many and what sorts of people are participating in formal education or training or informal learning now, and how do these proportions compare with previous surveys? Are learning opportunities accessible to those who need and want them or are there groups who are excluded from access? This section confines itself to the findings of the current 1996 survey and looks at current and recent participation in any form of adult learning to see what types of people are participating actively and what types are not. Does the pattern of current and recent participation fit with what we know of current needs, or are there groups who appear to be excluded or in need of special provision or learning support?

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of all adults say that they are currently learning and a further 17% have been learning recently, defined as in the last three years. As in 1990, more men than women are engaged in current learning, 25% compared with 21%. More men than women have also engaged in past learning over 3 years ago (25% compared with 21%). Significantly more women than men, 41% compared with 31%, have done no learning since they completed their full-time education. This is partly, but not entirely, accounted for by the higher proportion of older women in the population as a whole (Table 2).

Table 2: Participation in learning, men and women compared

	Total	Men	Women
Base – all respondents = 100%	4,673	2,270	2,403
Current learning	23	25	21
Recent learning (in the last 3 years)	17	18	17
All current/recent learning	40	43	38
Past learning (more than 3 years ago)	23	25	21
None since leaving full-time education	36	31	41

Participation in learning, by social class and employment status

Social class continues to be the key discriminator in understanding participation in learning (see Table 3). Of course, social class is closely related to occupation, but it is still a convenient short-hand measure which continues to differentiate effectively some types of people from others. Over half of all upper and middle class (AB) respondents are current or recent learners, compared with one-third of the skilled working-class (C2) and one-quarter of the unskilled working class and people on limited incomes (DE). Just over 40% of skilled manual workers and just over 50% of unskilled manual workers and pensioners have done no learning at all since the completion of their full-time education.

Table 3: Participation in learning, by social class

	Total	AB	C1	C2	DE
Base = all respondents = 100%	4,673	963	1,262	1,089	1,358
Current learning	23	32	32	17	12
Recent learning (in the last 3 years)	17	21	20	16	14
All current/recent learning	40	53	52	33	26
Past learning (more than 3 years ago)	23	28	21	25	20
None since leaving full-time education	36	19	27	42	53

Employment status (see Table 4) affects people's opportunities for learning at work as well as providing them with resources to take up learning opportunities and, for many, the motivation to learn. It is not surprising that this and other studies show that it is those working full-time who are most engaged in current or recent learning. Effectively half (49%) of full-time workers are learning compared with 42% of part-time workers and 40% of the unemployed. Those who are not working and those who are retired are learning at nearly half the rate, 23% and 20% respectively. The group described as 'not working' shows the highest proportion who have never studied at all since completing their full-time education (54%), and is likely to include many older women.

Participation in learning, by terminal age of education

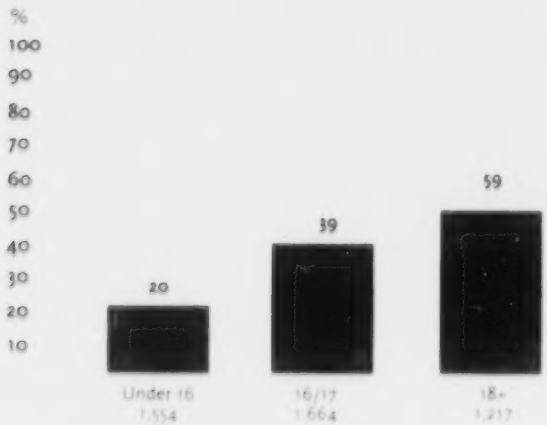
The best single predictor of adult learning continues to be the length of initial education. At some stage soon this will require a more sophisticated analysis than has typically been used until now. The school-leaving age was raised to 16 in 1965. This means that with only a few exceptions, all those under 45/6 must have stayed on until at least 16. While the majority of pupils gaining A levels still go straight on to university at 18, there are increasing numbers who are taking very diverse and mixed-mode routes through education and training in their late teens and early

Table 4: Participation in learning, by employment status

	Total	full-time	part-time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired	Student
Base – all respondents =100%	4,673	1,721	587	458	563	1,077	261
Current learning	23	26	19	15	10	12	97
Recent learning	17	23	23	25	13	8	2
All current/recent learning	40	49	42	40	23	20	99
Past learning	23	24	18	20	23	33	–
None since leaving full-time education	36	27	40	41	54	46	*

twenties. As of now, as Table 5 shows, the differences are still dramatic, with only 20% of those who left school early studying as adults, the figure doubling to 39% among those who stayed on to 16 or 17, and increasing by another 20% among those who stayed on until 18 or over. The learning divide starts early. The longer children can be helped and encouraged to stay on in schooling and full-time education and then to leave it with a liking for learning, the more chance they will have of taking advantage of lifelong learning opportunities.

Figure 2: Current and recent participation, by terminal age of education



As generations come through benefiting from increased school staying-on rates and increased opportunities in training and in further and higher education, these negative effects should diminish. However, current evidence of lack of basic skills and other disadvantages among the young will continue to provide problems for the foreseeable future. The case made in the Government's papers on Lifetime Learning and on Competitiveness, as well as the case made in the Liberal Democrat (1996) and Labour (1996) policy papers on training and lifelong learning

is that the economy cannot wait until the next generation grows up with the habit of learning. The two European Commission White Papers, sponsored by Delors and Cresson, (1996) make the same case.

Neither is it encouraging that as many as 40% of those whose initial education continued until 18 or over are not current or recent learners.

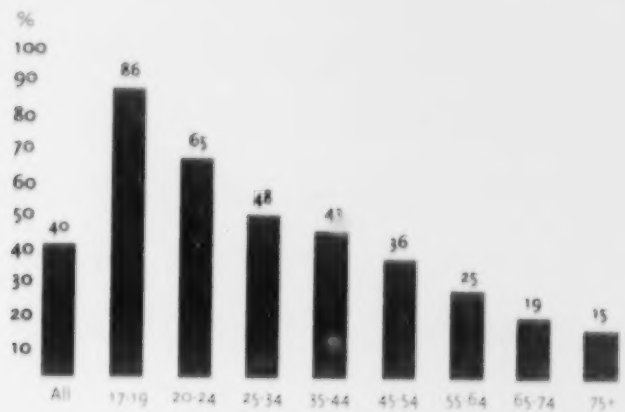
Table 5: Participation in learning, by terminal age of education

		Terminal Age of Education		
	Total	Under 16	16-17	18 and over
Base – all respondents = 100%	4,673	1,554	1,663	1,217
Current learning	23	10	19	32
Recent learning	17	10	20	27
All current/recent learning	40	20	39	59
Past learners	23	24	22	27
None since full-time education	36	56	38	14

Participation in learning, by age group

As Figure 3 shows, the older people are, the less likely they are to be current or recent learners, though the proportions of older learners are more encouraging than appeared in the 1994 MORI survey, and their span of subject interest is wide as the figures in Chapter 6 show.

Figure 3: Current/recent participation, by age



Participation in learning, by nation and region

The learning map is also uneven across the United Kingdom. For the first time in this series of surveys, it has been possible to cover all four nations of the United Kingdom, and the differences in participation do not make for comfortable reading.

Table 6: Participation in learning, by nation of the UK

	Total	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Base = all respondents = 100%	4,673	3,903	122 (511*)	414	234
Current learning	23	24	16	21	20
Recent learning	17	18	12	17	17
All current/recent learning	40	42	28	38	37
Past learning	23	24	17	18	16
None since full-time education	36	34	54	44	47

(* booster sample)

England shows the highest participation rate for current and recent learners, 4 and 5 percentage points ahead of Scotland and Wales respectively and 14 points ahead of Northern Ireland. This is clearly not an acceptable difference, and must have more to do with provision, circumstance and lack of opportunity than with lack of interest. It has been conventional thinking that Wales and Scotland have a greater commitment to education than England, but these findings do not confirm a beneficial effect for adults. The 1993–4 examination achievements of pupils in schools is highest in Scotland, followed by England with Wales the lowest (*Social Trends*, 1996).

The differences between the English regions as shown in Table 7 are as striking and raise similar questions.

Yorkshire and East Midlands top the list with the North, London and East Anglia following close behind. What is surprising is to find the West Midlands at the bottom of the list together with the North West, and with the South West and South East only 2 and 3 points behind. With the exception of East Anglia, the sample sizes for each region are not small. For some regions to rank 15 points ahead of others, when the question asked is a broad one about participation in all learning, justifies further enquiry. Obviously, demography, social class and the availability and nature of employment will all contribute to the differences: for example, the South East and the South West contain more older people who are less likely to be engaged in learning. Areas which have traditionally been centres of manufacturing industry rank low – education has not been a high priority in an area such as the West Midlands where many jobs had not required post-school

qualifications. Other research, for example in Liverpool, has shown how the lack of employment is a major factor in reducing interest in education and training.

Table 7: Participation in learning, by English region

	London	South East	South West	East Anglia	East Midlands	West Midlands	North West	Yorkshire	North
Base = all respondents = 100%	582	863	390	167	324	421	506	402	248
Current learning	27	23	19	29	26	16	22	31	22
Recent learning	17	15	18	14	24	19	13	21	23
All current/ recent learning	44	38	37	43	50	35	35	52	45
Past learning	24	23	22	24	25	29	25	22	29
None since full-time education	32	39	41	34	24	35	40	25	26

Another factor is the nature of local authority provision, and whom it attracts. Figures for enrolments on adult education courses for 1994 (*Social Trends*, 1996) show the percentage of women participants of 16 and over, ranging from 5.5% in Greater London to 2.4% in Yorkshire and Humberside, and the percentage of men from 2.3% in Greater London to 0.9% in Yorkshire & Humberside. The differential take-up of adult education courses by men and women has been noted elsewhere: two and a half times as many women take adult education courses as men, 4.0% of women compared with 1.6% of men in England. The differential pattern for Wales is similar with 3.1% of women compared with 1.2% of men.

However, all these factors are not an adequate explanation for the scale of the differences. A perfect market in education and training would imply that supply will develop to meet demand. The difficulty is that there continue to be no adequate statistics which cover the 'supply' side of education and training provision. Work by Woodhall (1980) for OECD and ACACE documented the continuing lack of adequate statistics in the 1970s and the situation has not improved since then. Improvements are being made in the collection of higher education data through HESA and further education data through the FEFC. Most of this, however, concentrates on qualification-led courses and will not provide enough information on less formal learning or training which is not qualification-led. Of course, the task is a difficult one, with the variety and complexity of provision increasing rather than decreasing. It is, however, unlikely that there are big enough supply-side differences to explain the evident differences in demand and participation.

Undoubtedly the availability of employment affects some of the shorter-term demand for work-related training, but there must be more complex underlying factors which vary from region to region and which require further explanation. With the TECs as major players in the field, the merging of the Departments for Education and Employment, and the move to regional structures in the UK and in Europe, the case for some form of regional planning for education and training provision becomes stronger.

Comparisons over time

Comparisons between current and recent measures of overall participation

The sequence of national surveys of adult participation in education and training was described in Chapter 2. The trends shown are important, not just because they show an overall increase in participation over time, but also because they show that people's perception and description of what counts as learning changes over time.

It is not possible to compare all the surveys with each other, as their different construction and purposes vary in significant respects. While the 1980 (ACACE) and 1990 and 1994 (NIACE) surveys focused on people's description of **studying**, the 1990 survey supplemented this with a question about the learning adults were undertaking informally.

The separate group of surveys, also described earlier, started by the Employment Department with Training In Britain in 1989, and followed by the SCPR survey with fieldwork in 1993, targeted the labour force (16-54) and focused on 'vocational or work-related learning'. A main improvement is that while the 1980 survey only covered England and Wales and the 1990 survey included Scotland, the 1996 survey also includes Northern Ireland. In 1990 the sample for Wales was boosted to allow for more detailed analysis, and similarly, Northern Ireland's sample was boosted in 1996, though it is weighted to its correct proportion in the main analysis. While the population of Northern Ireland forms only a small proportion of the UK population, its proper inclusion will only have a small effect on comparisons with previous surveys.

The results of the surveys are consistent in many respects, but not in all of them. The most obvious difference stems from whether or not the survey has been designed to cover the adult population or the labour force age groups. The 1996 survey was designed to take account of this and Table 8 shows a straightforward comparison of the two different population groups to demonstrate the increase in participation when the sample is limited to those aged 16-54: the participation rate in the labour force age group is 51% compared with 40% in the adult population. Obviously higher proportions of the age groups in the labour force are actively engaged in learning than in the adult population as a whole. In addition, a large group of 16-year-olds are still in full-time education.

Table 8: Participation in learning, 1996 labour force and adult population compared

	NIACE/GALLUP 1996 Labour force 16-54	NIACE/GALLUP 1996 Adult population 17+
Base – all respondents = 100%	3,253	4,673
Current learning	29	23
Recent learning	22	17
All current/recent learning	51	40
Past learning	20	23
None since leaving full-time education	29	36

Table 9 attempts a comparison of the broad patterns of learning over time, taken from the sequence of the four ACACE and NIACE surveys, but bearing in mind the differences noted earlier and the fact that they were carried out by different research agencies. Neither the original ACACE survey nor the 1994 MORI survey asked additionally about informal learning. The 1990 survey specifically added a question about informal and self-directed learning. While 17% of the adult population were recorded as engaged in some form of informal learning in 1990, 10% were **only** engaged in informal learning, and therefore formed a net addition to the participation rate. The SCPR survey developed a more detailed question which was designed particularly to probe about smaller episodes of workplace-based learning. The 1996 survey also used the extended question developed by SCPR. What appears to have affected the proportions found learning is, on the one hand in the 1990 survey the inclusion of 'informal, self-directed' learning, and on the other hand in the 1996 survey, the widening of the question to include smaller

Table 9: Comparison of participation in learning over time, adult population 17+ and over

	1980 Taylor-Nelson for ACACE	1990 BMRB for NIACE	1994 MORI for NIACE	1996 GALLUP for NIACE
Base – all respondents = 100%	2,448	4,608	4,041	4,673
Current learning	12 (2*)	13 (3*)	10 (3*)	23 (5*)
Recent learning	10	16	14	17
Current/recent learning	22	29	24	40
Past learning	26		23	23
None since full-time education	51		52	36

* denotes percentage of full-time learners in group

episodes of work-related learning. If the 1990 figure of 10% of only 'informal' learning is included, the overall participation among the whole adult population in 1990 is very similar to that in 1996, 39% compared with 40%. The MORI survey is in a sense now the odd one out as it asked only the more narrowly phrased question about studying.

Note also that these figures in Table 9 include the small proportion of students studying full-time and that this proportion is slowly increasing.

Comparison of participation in learning in the labour force age groups between 1993 and 1996

It is also possible to make an appropriate comparison between the participation rates recorded in 1993 for the SCPR Individual Commitment survey published in 1994 and the labour force age group in the 1996 survey. The proportions are broadly comparable as Table 10 shows, with the 1996 survey showing a slight increase in current learning but a decrease in recent learning. It is clear that the SCPR detailed methodology and very extended questionnaire does produce information about a larger volume of some types of learning episodes, particularly shorter ones. It is also possible that there may have been a drop in recent learning.

Table 10: Participation among 16-54 year-olds, SCPR and 1996 surveys compared

	1993 SCPR for Employment Dept	1996 GALLUP for NIACE
Base – all respondents = 100%	1,403	3,255
Current learners	19	21
Recent learners	29	22
full-time students	8	8
All current/recent learners	56	51

The SCPR survey followed up its initial question with a detailed exploration of these learning episodes. In its survey report it identifies 105 full-time students (weighted numbers) and 680 'current or recent learners' among its 1,403 respondents. The 680 'learners' shared 1,085 learning episodes. Reporting on the two most recent learning episodes, SCPR records that of these episodes, 29% lasted one week or less, with 35% lasting for less than one month and 44% lasting 3 months or less. Of the 29% lasting one week or less, 21% lasted 2-7 days and 8% lasted one day only (see Table 34).

The 1996 survey, after a question about respondents' current/recent learning, asked respondents to identify their main learning, and give fuller details about that. This generated responses

indicating longer and more substantial learning episodes, of which the vast majority (82% of both the labour market and the adult population) lasted for more than three months. Of the 16-54 group, 15% altogether lasted for three months or less, 8% lasted less than one month and 3% lasted less than 1 week.

Inevitably comparisons are difficult, but these differences are important. It seems clear that the SCPR survey in emphasising vocational and workplace-based learning has been more effective in picking up shorter episodes of work-related learning while the NIACE series has recorded a wider field of more substantial episodes. This may well account for the difference between the SCPR and the 1996 figures for the labour force age groups. The gap between participation levels reported by workers and those recorded by employers (mapped for example in *Training in Britain*, 1989) may also suggest that some short periods of work-based training, for example in upgrading information technology skills, are seen as work rather than learning, except where people surveyed are prompted more than once, in the way the SCPR survey prompted them. It may also mean that there is a rise in longer periods of study among a smaller group of the population.

An interesting by-product of the use in the 1996 survey of the extended SCPR question is that it appears to have reduced the impact of the additional NIACE question used in 1990 to identify additional informal and self-directed learning. Whereas in 1990 17% of people responded positively to a question about their own informal learning, and 10% were **only** engaged in informal learning, in 1996 answering after the extended SCPR question quoted on page 00, the figure for all informal learning reduced to 3% and there are no informal learners who are not also current/recent learners. Over two-thirds of subjects learned informally are creative arts and more than 1 in 10 are computer studies.

Patterns of participation in learning: demographic comparisons over time

The slight rise in overall participation between 1990 and 1996 has not affected the overall balance of men's and women's participation over time: more men still engage in current and recent learning than women.

It is clear that the emphasis on vocational and work-related education and training has tended to benefit men more than women. Men have continued to receive a greater share of substantial employer-funded education and training for adults, whilst women have outnumbered men by 2.5 to 1 in community-based adult education classes. The SCPR survey shows the proportion of men current/recent learners 11 points ahead of the women, compared with the 1996 16-54 age group where men are only 6 points ahead. The recent increase in women's participation in training at work may well account for this.

Inevitably patterns of learning are age-related. Table 12 groups all learners, both part- and full-time, and in 1990, both those studying formally and learning informally. Excluding those that

are studying full-time, the figures are extraordinarily stable. The main change is the large increase in younger people staying on in full-time education: 42% of 17-19 year-olds and 15% of 20-24 year-olds are recorded in 1996 as engaging in full-time study. The figures for those studying full-time in each age group are shown in brackets.

Table 11: Current/recent learning by gender, 1990 and 1996 compared

	1990 BMRB for NIACE	1996 GALLLUP for NIACE	SCPR	1996
	Proportion studying now/ recently and/or learning informally	Proportion who are current/ recent learners	16-54	16-54
Total respondents	39	40	56	51
Men	42	43	62	54
Women	36	38	51	48

NB The percentages are of the horizontal group, and the proportions include full-time students.

Table 12: Current/recent learning by age, 1990 and 1996 compared

	1990 BMRB for NIACE	1996 GALLUP for NIACE
	Proportion studying now/ recently and/or learning informally	Proportion which are current/recent learners
Total respondents	39 (3)	40 (5)
17-19	63 (11)	86 (42)
20-24	66 (12)	65 (15)
25-34	46 (1)	48 (2)
35-44	43 (1)	43 (1)
45-54	35 (-)	36 (1)
55-64	23 (*)	25 (*)
65 and over	15 (*)	18 (2)

NB The proportion of full-time students in each group is shown in brackets. Percentages are of the horizontal group

This table suggests that the dominance of young people in the UK education and training market remains strong, and that while the reduction in labour market opportunities has led to rising levels of young people's participation in education and training, there are only modest increases

among older age cohorts. Interestingly, it is among the two older age cohorts that movement is more marked. This increase is encouraging as the 1994 MORI survey indicated a possible drop in participation among older age groups perhaps, it was suggested, due to the effects of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act.

Current/recent learning by social class, 1990 and 1996 compared

Patterns of current/recent learning among different social classes have not changed very much (see Table 13). The main change is not encouraging: it is a drop in the proportion of skilled manual workers engaged in current or recent learning. The gap in current/recent participation rates between white-collar workers (C1s) and skilled manual workers (C2s) is growing. These figures show that professional and managerial workers and people in administrative or clerical jobs now display similar participation rates. There have been suggestions that many managers and professionals now have less time to commit to learning because of overload in their work. There is no evidence of this. Indeed, the opposite appears to be the case: they are under pressure to keep up with the game. The challenge of the National Training and Education Targets appears to have been understood by white-collar workers or they are under the most pressure to keep up at work with the structure and knowledge content of their job changing round them.

Table 13: Current/recent learning by social class, 1990 and 1996 compared

	1990 BMRB for NIACE	1996 GALLUP for NIACE
	Proportion studying now/ recently and/or learning informally	Proportion which are current/recent learners
Total sample	39	40
A/B	54	53
C1	50	52
C2	38	33
DE	25	26

NB Percentages are of the horizontal group and the proportions include full-time students.

By contrast, skilled manual workers (C2s) are now increasingly unlikely to take part in learning. The 5% drop in their current/recent participation is the largest shift in a basically stable pattern of participation. Looking just at current learners (Table 14) the drop in current learning is 4% for skilled manual workers and 3% among unskilled manual workers, both quite large proportions of those groups of learners. Many of these groups will have completed their full-time education at 16 or 17, and the drop shows up similarly in that group.

Table 14: Current learning by social class, 1990 and 1996 compared

	1990 BMRB for NIACE Proportion who are current and/or informal learners	1996 GALLUP for NIACE Proportion who are current learners
Total sample	23	23
AB	32	32
C1	31	32
C2	21	17
DE	15	12

NB Percentages are of the horizontal group and the proportions include full-time students

Geographical patterns of learning: 1990 and 1996 compared

The UK remains a country where the location of a person's home also has potentially a major effect on a person's opportunity to study. With the increase in part-time study for adults and the need for locally accessible provision, this has become more of an issue, not less, over the last few years, though the increased accessibility of communications technology should improve opportunities for many in the future. The changes in funding and structures brought by the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, referred to earlier, while providing some increased flexibility, have made co-ordinated planning between providers more difficult. Independent further education colleges, universities, both old and new, Training & Enterprise Councils (TECs) and private providers are encouraged to plan independently, and are often in competition. Cutbacks in local authority provision have been accompanied in many areas by cuts in discretionary grants.

There continue to be wide variations in the levels of participation in different regions, as noted in Chapter 3, and the differences between the regions and the regional variations over time are not basically stable, as other demographic indicators tend to be. Table 15 shows the major variations in participation patterns within individual regions. There is little reason to suppose that the surveys are not measuring genuine differences in participation, since only two regions had sample sizes of less than 100, though of course an individual's access to opportunities within a region may vary substantially. An approach to understanding these differences better, and to identify whether they are due to demand or supply may be to undertake a number of systematic area studies.

The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, in addition to centralising funding for post-16 provision of further education, maintained the duty upon local education authorities to secure

'adequate' provision for adult education outside those areas of mainly academic, vocational, certificated studies, including basic skills, listed in Schedule 2 of the Act as the FEFC's duty. The apparent variability in learning opportunities provides a strong argument for the definition of minimum standards of 'adequate' provision by local authorities and colleges. This could then be used as a bench-mark or performance indicator in areas where overall participation appears unusually low and as a guide to the Funding Council for their future funding priorities. It would also be useful to TECs and the Government's Regional Offices in their planning.

Table 15: Current/recent participation by region, 1980, 1990 and 1996 compared

	1980	1990	1996
	% engaged in current/ recent study only	% of current/recent and informal learners	% of current/ recent learners
Total sample	22	39	40
Greater London	25	40	44
South East	26	40	38
South West	22	43	37
East Anglia	*12	39	43
East Midlands	21	37	50
West Midlands	23	46	35
Wales	26	37	37
North West	22	40	35
Yorkshire/Humberside	25	40	52
North	*10	33	45
Scotland	Not surveyed	22	38
Northern Ireland	Not surveyed	Not surveyed	28

NB Percentages are of the horizontal group

* Sample size less than 100

Future learning intentions

Plans to take up learning in the future

An overview of trends of participation would not be complete without considering people's likelihood of taking up learning in the future, defined as within the next three years. Similar questions have been asked now in a number of the surveys and the patterns are stable enough to provide some indicators for the future. The proportion saying they are very likely or fairly likely to take up learning in the next three years is not encouraging. At 38%, it is 2 points less than the proportion that is engaged in current / recent study, and over half (55%) say that they are very or fairly unlikely to take up any learning in the future. The differences between men and women are marginal, with 2% more men likely to learn than women. The division is between those who are current or recent learners and those who are past or non-post-initial learners. While nearly three-quarters (72%) of current learners and 59% of recent learners are likely to learn in the next three years, the figure drops to one-quarter (26%) among past learners and only 13% among non-learners. Eighty-one per cent of adult non-learners say they are very or fairly unlikely to learn in the future.

Of course, many in this group are older or early retired and may feel that their working and therefore studying life is over, and certainly 80% of retired people say they are unlikely to learn in the future. However, looking just at the labour-market age group, the figures are of serious concern, since 54% of those who are not working, 51% of those who are working part-time and 41% of those who are unemployed say they are unlikely to learn in the future. In the 45-54 year-old age group, 57% are not likely to learn in the future and of those in that group who are not learning now, 28% are not interested or don't want to.

The survey also asked what people would like to learn about and what were the main things that were preventing people from learning these days. These topics will be looked at in more detail in Chapters 9 and 10.

Future intentions to take up learning, by nations of the UK and regions of England

Divisions are also marked between the nations of the UK and the English regions. A more detailed analysis of the figures shows that where people live does not just have an impact on

Table 16: Future intentions to take up learning, by gender and learning status

	Total	Men	Women	Current learners	Recent learners	Past learners	None since full-time
Base – all respondents = 100%	4,673	2,270	2,403	1,074	818	1,086	1,696
Very likely	20	22	19	51	30	8	4
Fairly likely	18	17	18	21	29	18	9
Fairly unlikely	9	10	9	8	12	14	7
Very unlikely	46	44	47	12	23	52	74
Don't know	7	7	6	8	6	9	5

Table 17: Future intentions to take up learning, by employment status

	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired	Student
Base – all respondents = 100%	4,673	1,721	587	458	563	1,077	261
Very likely	20	25	20	22	13	8	59
Fairly likely	18	22	20	22	17	8	14
Fairly unlikely	9	11	12	10	9	7	6
Very unlikely	46	35	42	36	54	73	11
Don't know	7	8	5	10	7	4	9

opportunities and on current participation, but also on future intentions to take part in learning. Table 18 ranks regions and nations in three ways. The first column ranks those with the highest current/recent participation down to the lowest. Yorkshire and East Midlands top the list, with Northern Ireland at the bottom of the list followed by the West Midlands and the North West. The top and bottom groups are as much as a quartile (24 points) apart, with Scotland and Wales both in the bottom half, 4 and 5 points below England respectively.

The second column lists nations and regions from top to bottom with the highest proportion saying that they are likely to learn in the next three years at the top. East Midlands, London and Northern take the top three places, and Northern Ireland, Wales and the North West take the bottom. The gap between the top and the bottom reduces somewhat to 16%, but is still uncomfortably large. Reversing the question and ranking nations and regions according to how unlikely people are to learn in the future does reduce the gap to 11%, confirms Northern Ireland and

the North West as 2 out of the 3 regions most unlikely to learn and adds Scotland as the second highest 'very unlikely to learn'. The least 'unlikely to learn', ie. positive to learning, are London and East Anglia, joined by the East Midlands and, somewhat surprisingly, by the West Midlands. Scotland continues to perform at a low level, again surprisingly since the reputation of the Scottish schools system is high.

Table 18: Future intentions to take up learning, by nation and region

	Current And Recent Participation		FUTURE INTENTIONS: Very And Fairly Likely To Learn In Future			FUTURE INTENTIONS: Very And Fairly Unlikely To Learn In Future		
		%			%			%
50+	Yorkshire	52	40+	E. Midlands	46	60+	**N. Ireland**	64
	E. Midlands	50		London	44		**Scotland**	61
40+	Northern	45		Northern	43		North West	61
	London	44		East Anglia	41	50+	**Wales**	59
	East Anglia	43		Yorkshire	41		South West	57
	England	42	30+	**England**	39		South East	55
	UK	40		**UK**	38		**UK**	55
30+	**Scotland**	38		South East	37		**England**	54
	South East	38		W. Midlands	37		Northern	54
	South West	37		South West	36		Yorkshire	52
	Wales	37		**Scotland**	34		E. Midlands	51
	W. Midlands	35		North West	32		W. Midlands	51
	North West	35		**Wales**	30		East Anglia	50
20+	**N. Ireland**	28		**N. Ireland**	30		London	50

The disparity between the three columns raises difficult questions for policy-makers and funders and for supporters of national and regional devolution! There are clear issues about standards and equity which arise. While some differences are explained by patterns of available employment and the death of traditional industries, others are not. The differences between London and East Anglia on the one hand, and Wales and the West Midlands on the other, are not easily explicable, neither is it clear why Yorkshire and the East Midlands now rank so high.

Future intentions to take up learning, trends over time

While patterns of participation in learning show a widening of the gap between participants and non-participants, the trend in future intentions may offer some grounds for cautious optimism. Three national surveys, SCPR, MORI and NIACE, 1996 as well as some regional Individual Commitment studies have asked about the likelihood of learning in the next three years, in addition to previous questions which had focused on the subjects, if any, people would like to learn about.

The 1996 survey asked a broadly framed question:

> How likely are you to take up any learning in the next three years?

as compared with the MORI survey which asked more specifically about adult education courses:

> How likely are you to take part in any adult education courses in the next three years?

Table 19 shows a rise in the proportion likely to learn in the next three years, of 5%, with most of the increase, from 29% to 39% shown among the men. It should be remembered that since fewer men study through adult education courses than women (see Chapter 3), the increase in men may be more apparent than real. More women have moved out of the 'fairly unlikely' group either to the 'highly likely' group or to the 'not at all likely' group.

Table 19: Future intentions to take up learning, 1994 and 1996 compared

	1994			1996			Labour force	
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	SCPR	1996 16-54
Base – all respondents = 100%	4,041	1,926	2,115	4,673	2,270	2,403	1,298	3,255
Very likely	15	13	17	20	22	19	36	27
Fairly likely	18	16	19	18	17	18	25	22
Total 'likely'	**33**	**29**	**35**	**38**	**39**	**37**	**61** †	**49**
Not very likely/ Fairly unlikely *	20	23	18	9	10	9	19	10
Not at all likely/ Very unlikely *	44	44	44	46	44	47	15	33
Total 'unlikely'	**64**	**67**	**62**	**55**	**54**	**56**	**34**	**43**
Don't know	3	4	3	7	7	6	4	8

* wording used by SCPR and in 1996

† 48% specified vocational learning

The table also attempts a comparison between the labour force age groups from the SCPR survey and the 1996 survey. SCPR shows nearly two-thirds of respondents as likely to learn, with one-third unlikely to learn. This contrasts with the 1996 labour force age group which shows just under a half likely to learn and one-third as very unlikely to learn. The higher rates of learning shown by SCPR tie in with their higher participation rates. The percentage of people likely to learn in the adult population as a whole drops by another 11 points and over a half of them are unlikely to learn.

As with patterns of current participation, future intentions to learn are markedly affected by the length of initial education (see Table 20). The increase in the proportion saying 'very likely to learn' is among those whose education continued to 18 or over. The shift comes again from the group who were 'fairly unlikely', and is in that sense encouraging. However, both of the early leaver groups show an increase in those who say they are 'very unlikely to learn'.

Table 20: Future intentions to take up learning, by terminal age of education

	1994				1996			
	Total	Under 16	16-17	18+	Total	Under 16	16-17	18+
Base-all respondents = 100%	4,041	1,535	1,505	812	4,673	1,554	1,663	1,217
Very likely	15	6	18	23	20	9	20	29
Fairly likely	18	11	21	26	18	10	21	25
Total 'likely'	**33**	**17**	**39**	**49**	**38**	**19**	**41**	**54**
Fairly unlikely	20	16	24	23	9	7	11	11
Very unlikely	44	66	33	26	46	70	41	28
Total 'unlikely'	**64**	**82**	**57**	**49**	**55**	**77**	**52**	**39**
Don't know	3	2	3	3	7	4	7	8

The final table (Table 21) in this section tells a similar, but less dramatic, story of the relationship between previous advantage and motivation for learning: 46% of the middle/upper classes are likely to learn in the future compared with 49% of those educated to 18 and over. The biggest positive increase (6%) is among C1s (white-collar workers). But the most interesting change, (with only one point less) is an increase in 1996 among skilled manual workers (C2) planning to take up learning. Given the fall in participation among C2s as current/recent learners, this is more surprising than is the rise among C1s, which is more in line with current patterns of participation.

Some politicians and policy-makers have been concerned that increased participation will reduce quality, and providers have been concerned that an increase in supply will provide too strong competition. This is unlikely. The evidence is that as people have more access to supply, they increase their demand. What is more difficult is to balance equity and access with efficiency, and not simply provide more for those who already have.

Table 21: Future intentions to take up learning, by social class

	1994					1996				
	Total	AB	C1	C2	DE	Total	AB	C1	C2	DE
Base-all respondents = 100%	4,041	658	1,084	1,028	1,271	4,673	963	1,262	1,089	1,358
Very likely	15	21	20	12	10	20	26	26	16	14
Fairly likely	18	23	19	17	14	18	20	19	18	14
Total 'likely'	**33**	**44**	**39**	**29**	**24**	**38**	**46**	**45**	**34**	**28**
Fairly unlikely	20	20	20	26	17	9	11	9	9	9
Very unlikely	44	35	37	42	56	46	37	40	50	54
Total 'unlikely'	**64**	**55**	**57**	**68**	**73**	**55**	**48**	**49**	**59**	**63**
Don't know	3	2	4	3	3	7	6	6	7	8

Subjects of current or recent learning

The changing environment

The next chapters focus on the learning that adults are currently, or have been, engaged in during the past three years. As described earlier, the basic question establishing participation in current or recent learning was drafted as broadly as possible to include all types of learning in any location and in any mode. It was a question asked of individuals themselves, not in terms of providers, and allowed the respondent to define what subjects they were studying. Previous studies have demonstrated the range and variety of subjects of study, and the difficulty in categorising them. There are some significant differences in subject choice over time, as well as differences between men and women and between age groups. Also of interest is the continued redefinition by adults of some activities as 'leisure' rather than as learning.

The emphasis, particularly for funding purposes, on vocational and qualification-based courses, is likely to have affected people's definitions of what learning constitutes. The increasing use of the term 'leisure' courses, while not necessarily meant to be derogatory, does imply that these courses are of less value than vocational ones, at least in the sense that they are not legitimated for funding purposes. At the same time an increasing number of people are studying for NVQs, which also now qualify for tax-relief. And for many people, the motivation to learn is intimately connected with the desire to be employed or to improve one's employment position: if there are no jobs in view, for many people there is little motivation to study. For all these reasons it is not surprising that work-related studies dominate choice and constitute a much larger element in people's learning agendas than was true in 1980.

Subjects of learning

The 1996 question about subjects of study was a broad one, and was followed by a prompt to encourage, in particular, the addition of basic skills subjects, which the previous surveys had appeared to undervalue.

> What are you learning about/have you most recently learned about?
> ***Probe:*** By that I include writing skills, reading and basic maths?

Table 22: Subjects of current/recent study, by gender, reason for study and future plans for learning

Subjects of Study	Total	Men	Women	Job-related	Personal development	Future education	Likely to learn	Not likely
Base – all current/ recent learners = 100%	1,892	982	910	907	985	227	1,261	631
Computer studies	17	18	15	20	14	16	17	15
Business/management	12	14	9	6	8	12	13	10
Other professional qualifications	11	11	12	14	9	13	12	10
Other vocational qualifications	9	9	10	12	7	8	9	10
Foreign languages	8	8	8	4	12	4	8	8
Nursing/health studies	8	5	11	11	5	9	8	8
Social sciences	6	5	7	5	7	9	7	4
(Other) academic subjects	7	6	7	5	8	10	7	5
(Other) leisure subjects	6	7	6	3	9	4	7	5
Accountancy	4	4	3	4	3	8	3	4
English language/literature	4	4	5	4	5	6	5	3
Engineering	4	7	1	5	3	5	4	3
History/local history	4	4	4	2	6	2	4	2
Science/maths/statistics	4	5	3	4	5	9	5	4
Social work/community care	4	2	6	4	4	3	4	3
Cookery/catering	3	3	4	3	4	4	3	4
Law	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3
Music	3	3	3	1	5	2	4	2
Painting/pottery/sculpture	3	2	4	*	5	4	3	4
Sports/keep-fit	3	3	2	2	3	1	3	2
Basic maths/numeracy	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	2
Handicrafts	2	1	3	1	2	*	2	3
Religion/theology	2	2	1	1	3	*	2	2
Shorthand/typing/ office skills	2	1	4	2	2	4	2	2
Don't know	1	1	1	*	2	1	1	1

*All subjects over 1% only listed

Table 23: Main subject and all subjects of study, by nations of the UK

	Main subject	All subjects	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Base – all current/ recent learners=100%	1,892	1,892	1,612	35	158	86
Accountancy	2	4	3	3	5	3
Basic reading/writing/literacy	*	1	1	–	2	1
Basic maths/numeracy	1	2	2	1	2	2
Building trades	1	1	1	–	1	1
Business/admin/management	9	12	12	12	8	12
Car maintenance	1	1	1	3	2	1
Carpentry/DIY	1	1	1	3	1	–
Computer studies	12	17	17	14	18	15
Cookery/catering	3	3	3	6	5	1
Dance	1	1	1	3	–	1
Dressmaking/tailoring/needlework	1	1	2	3	1	–
English as a second language	*	*	–	1	1	1
English as a foreign language	*	*	*	–	–	–
English language/literature	2	4	5	8	1	4
Engineering (electronic/ mechanical/ construction)	3	4	4	3	5	5
Foreign languages	5	8	8	5	9	12
Gardening/horticulture	1	1	1	3	1	–
Handicrafts	1	2	2	1	3	1
Law	2	3	3	2	1	3
Local history/history	2	4	4	5	3	3
Music	2	3	4	5	1	1
Nursing/first-aid/health studies	6	8	8	9	6	5
Painting/pottery/sculpture/design	2	3	3	4	1	3
Photography	*	1	1	1	1	1

Religion/bible studies/theology	1	2	2	3	2	1
Science/maths/statistics	3	4	4	5	6	4
Shorthand/ typing/office training	1	2	2	2	1	1
Social sciences	4	6	6	6	5	6
Social work/social services/ community care	3	4	3	6	5	6
Sports/gymnastics/keep fit	1	3	2	7	4	2
Other professional qualifications	10	11	11	14	14	18
Other vocational qualifications	8	9	9	5	11	9
Other academic subjects	4	7	7	7	4	7
Other leisure subjects	4	6	7	5	5	6
Don't know/can't remember	2	1	1	3	*	3

Despite this verbal prompt, these subject areas do not appear in the sort of proportions that might be expected on the basis of other relevant work eg. by the Basic Skills Unit. Neither does the sample cover enough members of different ethnic minority groups to register English as a second language (ESOL) adequately. At minimum, it is clear that the term 'English' is also used to cover ESOL. In a recent study of ethnic minority participation in education and training, English language skills was rated the highest subject of study, being mentioned by 18% of all current recent learners. Among people from the Indian sub-continent, it rated 27%, and among the Chinese, 26% (Sargant, 1993). The Basic Skills Unit, by developing a variety of techniques, has fortunately been able to advance understanding in this area and this requires separate attention (Basic Skills Agency, 1996).

Looking first at the current 1996 survey, vocational, professional and work-related studies dominate the list and the differences between men and women are less marked than in previous surveys. Table 22 shows all the subjects which rated more than 1% in 1996. Interesting differences emerge between those who give work-related reasons for their studies, those whose motivation is more for some form of personal development and those who are studying to aid educational progression. Differences are more marked in relation to current motivation than to future plans for learning.

If respondents said that they were studying more than one subject, they were asked which was the main subject, and a number of more detailed questions were then asked, but only about the main subject of learning. Table 23 starts with a listing of the main subject of study for current recent learners, and then looks at all subjects of study against the nations of the UK. The list of subjects is given in alphabetical order in its entirety in this table.

Computer studies retains its premier position as the **main** subject of study (12%) as well as leading the list for all subjects of study. It is followed by business/administration/management which ranks second (9%). Social sciences and social work/care together account for 7% of main subjects, followed by nursing/health studies (6%) and foreign languages (5%). The majority of other main subjects are accounted for under the headings of groups of other professional (10%) and other vocational (8%) subjects.

Table 24 summarises the main groupings of subjects of study in percentage order. When the four nations are compared across all subjects of study, some differences emerge. Computer studies and other professional qualifications are most important in Northern Ireland, with foreign languages and vocational qualifications ranking lower. Similarly, computer studies and professional qualifications rank high in Scotland, but with nursing/health studies and academic subjects lower. In Wales, professional qualifications overtake computer studies, with foreign languages ranking third along with social work/care and business/administration. 'Foreign languages' is placed in quotes in respect of Wales since the questionnaire did not ask people about mother tongue and neither did this or previous surveys ask separately about the Welsh language. The sample size for Wales is, of course, small and in the one case where Welsh was written in under 'other', it was included with other languages. Social work/care/social services are particularly important in Wales and Northern Ireland.

Table 24: All subjects of study – summary of main groupings by nations of the UK

	All subjects	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Computer studies	17	17	14	18	15
Business/administration/ management	12	12	12	8	12
Other professional qualifications	11	11	14	14	18
Social science/social work/ community care	10	9	12	10	12
Other vocational qualifications	9	9	5	11	9
Nursing/ health studies	8	8	5	9	12
Foreign languages	8	8	5	9	12
Other academic subjects	7	7	7	4	7
Engineering	4	4	3	5	5
Science/maths/ statistics	4	4	5	6	4
Creative arts	4	4	5	2	4

Essentially the same question and list of subjects studied has now been used over the series of ACACE and NIACE surveys and Table 25 compares the subjects studied in 1980, 1990 and 1996. With a few small exceptions, the categories are the same, though the language of description has sometimes changed. Some jobs and job functions have changed over the last 15 years, the most obvious changes being brought by the computer. The virtual demise of the shorthand and copy-typist, with increased multi-skilling in offices, has reduced the proportion learning secretarial/office skills from 8% (14% of women) in 1980 to 6% in 1990 and 2% in 1996. The same skill needs are now met by computer studies, which does not just achieve the same percentage as it did in 1990 (8%), but has doubled it to 17%. In 1980, computer studies was a male subject and presumably studied by people such as programmers and systems analysts. In 1990, men and women took computer studies in similar numbers, but shorthand/typing was also still important for women (12%). By 1996, shorthand/typing has virtually disappeared and computer-related studies has taken over, but more men (18%) than women (15%) are studying it!

The decline in the study of all forms of engineering from 16% in 1980 to 7% in 1990 and 4% in 1996 is clearly a function of the decline of manufacturing industry. It is balanced by increases in the professional, managerial and administrative areas, where participation by women is now at a more encouraging level. Vocational qualifications of many sorts are maintaining their numbers, but not increasing from the level of 1990. It is not possible to separate out all the professional and vocational qualifications as the numbers of individual subjects are too great. Particularly important for women, however, are nursing, midwifery and health studies (11% of women) and the social sciences, social work and care areas which together account for 13% of women's subjects, a significant increase on previous years.

It is clear that the redefinition of some subjects which people had classed as learning in 1980 has continued. Sport and other physical activities rate only a modest 3% compared with 19% in 1980, and handicrafts, then including sewing, knitting, etc, for 15% of women now rates only 3%. It is not that people are ceasing to engage in such activities, as the parallel study on *Learning and participation in arts and crafts* (Sargant, 1996) shows, but many people do not consider that they are now to be classed as learning. One hypothesis for this is that the public emphasis on vocational learning and the importance of qualifications has caused people to downplay what is increasingly thought of as 'learning for leisure'. An interesting example of this is the repositioning of The Learning Channel shown on cable and satellite under its initials TLC and the associated decision to limit its programming to home skills and hobbies. TLC, it was suggested, could also stand for The Leisure Channel! The effective demise in some areas of the provision of general adult education is also likely to have had an effect. Many sports facilities have also been operated through leisure and recreation services for many years now, or are commercially provided.

Sport and physical activities present a more complex picture. Sports Council statistics show that practising/engaging in many specific sports events continues to increase. However, the major increases are in individual activities such as walking and cycling, which do not require learning.

Table 25: Subjects of current study, 1980, 1990 and 1996 compared

	1980			1990			1996		
Subjects of study	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Base – all current/recent learners = 100%	543	260	283	1,205	603	602	1,892	982	910
(Other) vocational qualifications	6	6	6	9	12	7	9	9	10
Foreign languages	9	6	10	9	7	10	8	8	8
Computer studies	5	9	1	8	9	8	17	18	15
Engineering: electronic, mechanical, construction	16	31	2	7	14	*	4	7	1
Shorthand, typing, office training	8	1	14	6	1	12	2	1	4
Business/administration/ management	13	22	6	6	7	5	12	14	9
Other professional qualifications	8	10	5	5	4	5	11	11	12
Nursing/midwifery	7	6	8	4	1	7	8	5	11
Cookery/catering	3	1	4	4	2	5	3	3	4
* Arts subjects (including history)/ other academic subjects	8*	7*	10*	3*	3*	4* History	7 4	6 4	7 4
Social sciences	4	3	5	3	3	4	6		7
Social work/social services/care	2	1	3	3	1	5	4	2	6
Science/math/statistics	7	7	7	3	4	3	4	5	3
ESOL		NR			NR		1	–	1
English language/ literature	8	7	9	3	1	5	4	4	5
Handicrafts	9	2	15	2	*	4	2	1	3
Car maintenance	* 2	4	*	2	3	1	1	2	0
Religion/theology		NR		1	2	1	2	2	1
Music	3	3	2	1	2	1	3	3	3
Building trades	2	3	*	1	2		1	1	0

Dress-making/tailoring	4	–	9	1	*	1	1	1	2
Painting/sculpture/ pottery	4	1	6	1	*	1	3	2	4
Photography							1	2	0
Sports/gymnastics/ keep fit	19	7	30	1	1	1	3	3	2
Carpentry/DIY	2	3	1	1	2	*	1	2	0
Gardening/horticulture		NR		1	2	*	1	1	1
School courses	2	3	2	1	1	2	Other 6	leisure 7	subjects 6
Basic skills							3	3	3

NR = not separately recorded

rather than in organised sport. Keep fit/yoga also show a marked increase over 10 years, but specifically among women (*Social Trends* volumes 17 & 26). While 16-24 year-olds spend an average of 3 hours a week on sports participation, the average for the population as a whole is only one hour a week.

Foreign languages continue to rank high on the list of subjects which are studied both for vocational and personal reasons. They join with a number of other subjects which some people learn for personal pleasure and development, while others learn to provide a route to educational progression. The 1996 survey has classed general 'arts' subjects in with other academic subjects, which with history (4%) and maths/science (3%) account for 14% of subjects. Separate from this are the creative and expressive arts, roughly stable at 4%: painting, drawing, sculpture, pottery and design. These are discussed in more detail in the parallel study noted earlier (Sargant, 1996).

Subjects of study among labour force age groups

Of course, the subjects of current/recent study of the labour force age groups are more heavily work-related than for the adult population as a whole (see Table 26). The SCPR survey aggregated the subjects of individual learning episodes, whereas the 1996 survey asked about all subjects learned currently or recently, and the answers were categorised somewhat differently. SCPR's report focuses on work-related subjects, and it is possible to attempt a broad comparison with their groupings, though their method of questioning has obviously recorded less general learning. Apart from 'teaching' which the 1996 survey did not separately categorise, the groupings of the main subjects are remarkably similar.

Table 26: Subjects of study among labour force age groups, SCPR and 1996 compared

	SCPR 1993			1996 16-54		
	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women
Base = all learning episodes = 100%	1,023	532	492			
Base = all current/recent learners = 100%				1,656	861	795
Training for particular trades or professions	37	36	39	42	37	47
Keyboard and computing skills	19	17	20	19	19	19
Administration and management	12	13	11	13	15	11
Teaching	5	2	8		NR	
Engineering	6	11	*	4	7	1
* Academic subjects	7	7	7	8	7	9
Foreign languages	3			7	6	8
Science/maths/statistics	NR			5	6	4
Other subjects	8	8	9			

* categories of relevance to 5% or more learning episodes are shown

Patterns of learning change across the life-cycle, as Table 27 shows. A number of subject choices are more job-related than others and more general educational areas of study come into their own as people get older and the variety of learning increases. Computer studies presents a very special picture, with a peak among the 35-44 year-olds of 22%, in mid-career, and a second peak among 65-74 year-olds of 21%, and even 16% of the 75 and over category. The other favoured subject among older people is foreign languages, increasing at early retirement and retirement age. These are followed by other liberal adult education subjects, including the creative arts and leisure subjects. Business/administration and management are career-based subjects tailing off at 45-54; professional qualifications, perhaps encouraged by the requirement for continued professional updating, do not tail off until 55-64. Other vocational qualifications peak at 35-44, but continue high till 55-64. It is encouraging that nursing and health studies, especially relevant for women are ranked high for all three groups, 25-34s, 35-44s and 45-54s. Social work/care attracts both the youngest age group and the 25-34s most.

The computer studies finding is particularly interesting since the 1994 MORI survey showed no take up of secretarial or computer studies among people 65 and over. It is interesting to speculate about the motives: keeping up with grandchildren and an increasing number of older people volunteering, running organisations and acting as trustees. Certainly there are reports of older people having the time and money to surf the Internet. Academic subjects are highest among the younger age groups. What is less encouraging is the low take-up for general liberal

adult education and the creative arts, which do not start to build up their figures until people are in their middle years.

Since gaining employment or improving one's employment situation is a main motive for learning, it is in this section interesting to look finally at subjects of study against people's employment situation. Computer studies, as noted earlier is significant across all employment situations with the exception ironically of students. It is, however, likely that students take computers for granted as an automatic aid to their studies: most of them will have become computer literate at school. Business/administration/management are particularly important for those working full-time (16%), those who are unemployed (16%), and those who are students (14%). Other professional qualifications also rank high for students (16%), followed by those in full-time work (13%). Other vocational qualifications rank highest (11%) for those working both full-time and part-time as well as those not now working.

Foreign languages, as computer studies, are interesting as they clearly meet both vocational and academic and more personal needs. A solid, but small, proportion (6%) of full-time, part-time and unemployed people are studying foreign languages. The proportion doubles and trebles, however, among those who are not now working or are retired. Nursing/health studies rank highest among those who are working part-time (16%) or are not currently working (10%):

Table 27: Subjects* of current/recent study (rating over 4%), by age

	Total	17-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Base – all current recent learners =100%	1,892	221	299	422	371	266	143	117	52
Computer studies	17	11	12	16	22	18	15	21	16
Business/management	12	14	16	13	13	9	7	–	10
Other professional qualifications	11	14	15	12	12	12	8	2	5
Other vocational qualifications	9	10	8	8	13	10	11	4	3
Foreign languages	8	9	4	4	7	9	12	25	16
Nursing/health studies	8	5	6	9	11	9	6	3	1
Social sciences	6	8	7	7	5	4	5	2	9
Social work/services/ community care	4	4	3	5	4	4	3	–	1
Creative arts inc. photography	4	5	4	3	3	6	7	8	–
Other academic subjects	7	11	7	7	6	6	3	2	8
Other leisure subjects	6	2	5	5	8	7	9	13	9

these are likely to include parents of younger children. Social sciences / social work / care similarly rank high for those working part-time (12%), followed by those working full-time and those not in work (both at 9%). Among students, social sciences rank high, at 12%.

Creative arts, photography and other academic subjects are ranked highest by those who are retired (9%) and those who are unemployed (7%). More retired people also rank other 'leisure' subjects high (12%), while other academic subjects are of most interest to students (13%).

Table 28: Main subjects of current/recent study, by employment status

	All	Full-time	Part-time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired	Student
Base – all current/ recent learners = 100%	1,892	853	246	180	133	220	259
Computer studies	17	18	19	17	18	18	10
Business/admin/management	12	16	6	6	3	2	14
Other professional qualifications	11	13	11	6	10	4	16
Other vocational qualifications	9	11	11	9	11	7	6
Foreign languages	8	6	6	6	10	19	8
Nursing/health studies	8	9	16	3	10	3	2
Social sciences	6	5	5	5	4	4	12
Social work/ services/ community care	4	4	7	2	5	1	3
Creative arts including photography	4	2	5	7	4	9	3
Other academic subjects	7	6	5	7	6	4	13
Other leisure subjects	6	6	7	9	9	12	1

Reasons for learning

Respondents were asked to name all the subjects they had been learning in the past three years, but were then asked to indicate which was the main one. As noted earlier, more detailed questions were then asked about their main subject of learning. Table 29 shows the reasons given for choosing to learn the main subject or skill. They fall into three groups. Nearly half of all reasons are work-related, and for those who are 25-44, the figures rises to over half. Just over 10% are interested in gaining a qualification or getting on a course, 24% of 17-19 year-olds and 17% of 20-24s. Just over one-third of respondents offer reasons which have more to do with personal

Table 29: Reason for choosing subject of main learning

	All	Men	Women	17-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Base – all current/ recent learners = 100%	1,892	982	910	221	299	422	371	266	143	117	52
Interested in the subject	19	18	20	14	16	12	15	14	37	49	43
To develop myself as a person	9	9	9	4	7	8	10	11	10	15	8
I enjoy learning and study	6	5	7	5	3	4	3	9	9	13	13
To meet people	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	5	3	–
All personal development reasons	**36**	**34**	**38**	**24**	**27**	**25**	**29**	**37**	**61**	**80**	**64**
To get a recognised qualification	10	9	11	16	16	11	9	6	2	–	5
To help me get on a future course	2	2	3	8	1	2	2	1	–	–	3
All education/ progression reasons	**12**	**11**	**14**	**24**	**17**	**13**	**11**	**7**	**2**	**–**	**8**
To get a job	14	14	15	39	25	12	9	5	5	–	12
To help me in my current job	12	15	10	3	7	15	18	20	10	4	1
To change the type of work I do	6	6	5	1	6	8	9	7	3	–	3
To gain a promotion	5	6	4	1	4	9	6	4	3	–	–
To make my work more satisfying	5	4	5	2	3	5	6	6	5	4	–
To gain a rise in earnings	2	2	2	–	2	3	2	2	1	–	–
Had no choice – employer chose	3	3	2	*	2	4	3	5	2	1	–
Had no choice – benefit requirement	1	1	1	2	–	*	1	1	1	–	–
All work-related reasons	**48**	**51**	**44**	**48**	**49**	**56**	**54**	**50**	**30**	**9**	**16**
Other reasons	4	4	5	3	3	2	4	5	7	10	11

development and interest. Such personal development reasons form one-quarter of reasons among the younger age groups, rising to 30-35% as people move to middle age and increasing to two-thirds and more from 55 onwards.

More men (51%) give work-related reasons than women (44%), while more women give reasons related to education and progression (14% to 11%) and personal development reasons than men (38% to 34%). Within the group of work-related reasons there are also interesting age differences. For the younger groups, getting a job is the most important, mentioned by 39% of 17-19 year-olds and a quarter (25%) of 20-24 year-olds. The next two age groups still include 1 in 10 who want to study to get a job. The three age groups from 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 are more concerned with studying to help in their current job, and this is also more important for men than for women (15% compared with 10%). Significant groups, around 1 in 12, in the three age groups from 25 to 54 want to learn in order to change the type of work they do. Studying to gain promotion is highest among the 25-34s.

The SCPR survey, focusing on work-related courses, recorded few personal development and education progression reasons for learning. The most interesting differences among SCPR's work-related reasons is the very high proportion who are doing the course to make their work more satisfying (26%) and the second highest group who had no choice; the course was chosen for them by the employer (20%). More people in the 1996 survey wanted to study to help them in their current job (12%), and also to get a recognised qualification (10%).

Information and advice about learning opportunities, length of learning and its location

Despite many years of development work supported by a number of agencies and individuals, the provision of information and advice to adults is still, as *Lifetime Learning: A Policy Framework* notes, 'variable in its quality and in its coverage'. Stepping-stones have been the ACACE report *Links to Learning* (ACACE, 1979), and UDACE's *Challenge to Change* (UDACE, 1986). Indeed 1996 is the tenth anniversary of the setting up of the Training Access Points (TAPS) system, now supported by the TECs/LECs. The Employment Department has also funded valuable development projects involving entitlements for guidance. More recently, the RSA has supported the setting up of the National Advisory Council for Careers and Educational Guidance, to be called The Guidance Council. However, sources of information and guidance for adults are still patchy, many adults are unaware of how to find out appropriate information, and the image of careers guidance is still very much that of a service aimed at the young. Every major survey since the mid-1980s has highlighted the importance of the workplace as a source of advice and guidance on learning opportunities (Alloway & Nelson, 1987; Gallie & White, 1993). The 1996 survey confirms the importance of the employer, the training officer and work as the main source of information about current or recent learning, particularly for men: 26% of men noting work as the main source of advice compared with 18% of women.

Source of information about learning

What is more important, as Table 30 makes clear, is that different age groups have obtained their information from quite different sources. People's work/employer is particularly important for the three middle age groups, recorded by nearly one-third of each of the groups. More than half the 17-19 year-olds obtain their information from school, with a further 20% getting it from a further or higher education institution, and 10% from the Careers Service. The main source for 20-24 year olds becomes further and higher education (26%) followed by school (17%) and then friends/family (14%) and work/employer (13%). Among 35-44 year-olds, work and the employer dominate (31%), with only friends/family/workmates otherwise important (15%), and 45-54s show the same pattern, though adult education centres reach 8% of this group. With older people, informal mechanisms become more important with friends, workmates and family ranked highest, followed by newspaper advertisements, adult education centres and the public library.

Comparisons between 1994 and 1996 show little change with the exception that spelling out the

three types of educational institution separately appears to have increased their total significance somewhat. In 1994, grouping educational institutions together, the proportion was 14% and in 1996, identifying them separately shows a proportion of 21%. The quite high proportion for university/college of higher education suggests that there may be confusion in the public's mind between the different types of institutions, in particular with the local college of further education being confused with the smaller category of colleges of higher education. After all, many people still call their local new university, 'the Poly,' or adult education and part-time study 'night-school'.

Table 30: Source of information about main current/recent learning*

	1994	1996			Age							
	All	Total	Male	Female	17-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Base – all current/ recent learners = 100%	970	1,892	982	910	221	299	422	371	266	143	117	52
Work/employer/ training officer	21	22	26	18	6	13	32	31	28	16	7	8
Friends/family/ workmates	17	15	14	16	6	14	17	15	12	22	22	25
School	12	10	9	11	53	17	2	1	1	1	1	*
University/college of higher education		10	9	11	11	18	12	7	6	7	6	9
Further education/ technical college	14	6	5	7	8	8	5	5	6	4	3	10
Adult education centre/ evening institute		5	3	6	1	4	3	5	8	5	11	7
Newspaper adverts	13	7	6	9	3	6	8	7	8	13	10	2
Library	2	3	3	4	1	2	2	4	4	6	10	7
Careers service/ guidance service	4	3	3	3	10	6	2	2	1	–	–	–
Job Centre	2	3	4	2	1	4	4	4	4	*	–	*
Printed publicity elsewhere	4	3	3	3	*	3	3	4	4	3	6	2
Printed publicity delivered to home	4	3	4	3	1	3	3	3	6	2	5	8

*Sources over 1% only listed

The focus on work-related episodes in the SCPR survey shows up again in the source of information about learning. The question they asked was a double one covering both where and to whom did they talk.

> Where did you go for information/advice and who did you talk to so you could find out about it?

The SCPR survey identifies work/employer/training officer as the source for nearly half (49%) of all learning episodes. School is insignificant as a source (1%), while family and friends are comparable (15% compared with 13%) as are educational institutions (18% compared with 21%). Around 1 in 10 in both the SCPR and 1996 surveys get their information from printed materials; newspapers, adverts, etc.

There are a number of other sources of information but none of them score more than 1%. They include TECs/LECs, community centres, voluntary organisations, the WEA, the Town Hall, CABx, local radio and television.

Table 31: Source of information about main current/recent learning*, by nations of the United Kingdom

	UK	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Base – all current/ recent learners = 100%	1,892	1,612	86	158	35
Work/employer/training officer	22	22	12	27	17
Friends/workmates/family	15	15	17	15	22
School	10	10	15	9	16
University/college of HE	10	10	15	11	8
Further education/technical college	6	6	8	3	11
Adult education centre	5	5	2	1	1
Newspaper advertisements	7	7	7	12	4
Careers/guidance services	3	3	6	2	4
Job Centre	3	3	3	7	1
Library	3	4	3	–	*
Printed publicity elsewhere	3	3	5	1	9
Printed publicity delivered to home	3	3	4	2	5

*Sources over 1% only listed

There do appear to be marked differences between the four nations in their use of or access to information about subjects of learning, as Table 31 shows. Scotland ranks the employer/

workplace highest (27%) and Wales ranks it lowest (12%). Friends/family/workmates, ie, word of mouth is the main source in Northern Ireland (22%), and higher than for any other nation. School ranks higher both in Wales and in Northern Ireland. University/HE College also ranks high in Wales, whereas further education/technical college is higher in Northern Ireland. Newspaper advertisements rank particularly high for Scotland, and job centres are also highest in Scotland. Adult education centres only rank in England. How far this is due to the nature of the provision and how far it is due to attitude and habit is an important question.

It is not encouraging that organised sources of information such as the careers services and job centres feature at such low levels. The findings do suggest that there is scope for more professional provision, and also for more publicity about appropriate sources of information. They provide support for the proposals in *Lifetime Learning: A Policy Framework* (DfEE, 1996) for the development of national standards and 'well sign-posted and co-ordinated services'.

There are fewer differences in how people find out about their learning between the English regions. With the exception of the South-West, (by only one point), work/employer is the most important source of information. Across all the regions, three of the other main sources share the top answers: friends/relatives/workmates, university/college of higher education and school. Exceptions are few: further education/technical college is in the top four in the North-West and in the North. Adult education centre/evening institute is in the top four in London, the South-West and in the North-West. Careers guidance only features in the top four in East Anglia. Newspaper adverts feature in the South East and in the North. What are significant are the negative facts, that the information, careers and guidance services feature very low down the list as do job centres, TECs/LECS, libraries and other local service organisations.

Location of learning

In earlier studies, it was always assumed that people went to an institution to follow a course, and in 1980 questions were framed to ask at which type of institution people had studied. The 1990 survey turned the question around to ask more specifically about the physical location of learning: was it in the workplace, or at home or in an educational institution? In later surveys the question has become an amalgamation of the two ideas, and comparisons have therefore become more difficult. Consistent with its emphasis on smaller episodes of work-related learning, the SCPR survey recorded 32% as learning at work and 23% at a training centre (see Table 32). These figures are quite different from all the NIACE surveys. Both the 1990 and 1996 surveys show 15% studying at work, and the 1994 MORI survey shows 14% of most recent learning located at work. Training centres, whether public or private, were not separately recorded in the 1994 survey. In 1996, employer's training centres are cited by 3% and private training centres by another 3%, in both the labour-force age group and the adult population. This compares closely with 7% mentioning training centres, not further defined, in 1990.

It is also difficult to make comparisons with the 1994 MORI survey in respect of educational institutions as the location question was first asked broadly about where people had studied or had classes, and was then followed up with a question asking 'which they had gone on most recently'. The effect of the MORI version of the question appears to have been to increase the proportions answering about educational institutions to over 60%, compared with the 49% shown in Table 32 for 1996. The equivalent grouping in the 1990 survey showed the aggregate of educational institutions at 39% (Sargant, 1991).

Table 32: Main place of learning, for people's main subject of learning

	1996 Adult population	1996 16-54	1993 SCPR
Base – all current/recent learners = 100%*	1,892	1,656	1,023*
Where I work	15	15	32
Employer's training centre	3	3	13
Private training centre/hotel/conference centre	3	3	10
Jobcentre or Jobclub	*	*	*
University/College of Higher Education/Open University	21	23	6
Further Education College/Technical College	19	20	14
Evening Institute/Adult Education Centre	9	7	5
Community Centre	2	1	1
Workers' Educational Association	*	–	*
Skill Centre	1	1	1
Trade Union	*	–	NR
With an informal group e.g. Women's group/church	1	*	*
Voluntary organisation e.g. Pre School Alliance	*	*	*
At home – structured correspondence course or open learning	5	4	2
At home – informal learning/from book	10	7	9
At home – from TV/radio	1	1	
Other educational institution	3	5	3
Other	6	5	4
Don't know	*	1	1

* Based on learning episodes, not learners

The spread of social classes against the types of educational institutions fits with what is known from national statistics, that the upper and middle classes still dominate university education, but that further education colleges are particularly important for white collar and manual workers. Both types of institutions are important for those whose motivation is educational progression. Adult education centres appeal evenly across the social classes, and are important for those people whose motivation is not just job-related. It is also encouraging that learning at home, informally from books, though highest among ABs is consistent across the other three groups. Correspondence/ open learning courses are used more by the non-manual groups. It is worth noting that it is skilled manual workers (C2s) who are the highest group learning 'at work' and one-quarter of people learning for job-related reasons are learning at work.

Educational institutions feature most among those whose reasons for learning are educational progression while those who are learning for personal development are more catholic in their location, using adult education as well as further and higher education and also studying informally at home (Table 33).

Differences between the 1996 adult population as a whole and the labour market age group are small. The workplace-related figures in the labour-market sample are identical, with further and higher education locations 3 points up, and adult education locations 2 points down and home-based informal and open learning 4 points down.

Length of study

Four out of ten of respondents (42%) surveyed have been learning or studying their main subject for more than a year, slightly down from 48% in 1990. Direct comparison with the SCPR survey which measures the length of learning episodes is not straightforward. SCPR's sequence of related questions undertaken identified, as noted earlier, much larger numbers of short periods of learning: 44% of SCPR episodes lasted for less than 3 months as against 15% in the 1996 survey and 17% in the 1990 survey. Table 34 shows 29% of the SCPR learning episodes lasting less than 1 week, compared with 3% of the 1996 survey. By reverse, the NIACE surveys pick up more episodes of longer learning. It is not sensible to suggest that one survey is correct and the other is not, but that they are clearly measuring different things. The research and policy challenge is to identify exactly what the differences are and decide how to deal with them methodologically, since the current attempt to deal with them by asking essentially the same question has clearly not solved the problem, and certainly affects the interpretation of overall current participation rates. The other key difference is the very high don't know/can't remember figure shown in the SCPR survey, which may indicate differences in interpretation. There is little difference between the labour market age group and the adult population in the 1996 survey: the 16-54s include 2% more reporting 3-6 months study and 3% less reporting study over 2 years.

Table 33: Main place of learning, by social class and reasons for learning

	1996	AB	C1	C2	DE	Job-related reasons	Personal development	Educational progression
Base – all current/ recent learners = 100%	1,892	508	656	364	365	907	985	227
Where I work	15	12	14	21	14	25	6	9
Employer's training centre	3	2	4	3	3	5	1	3
Private training centre	3	4	2	2	5	4	3	1
Jobcentre or Jobclub	*	–	*	–	*	1	*	–
University/College of Higher Education Open University	21	23	17	16	15	22	21	28
Further Education College/ Technical College	19	14	18	25	24	20	18	27
Evening Institute/ Adult Education Centre	9	9	8	9	10	5	12	7
Community Centre	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	*
Workers' Educational Association	*	*	*	*	–	–	1	–
Skill Centre	1	*	1	2	2	1	1	1
Trade Union	*	–	*	–	–	–	*	–
With an informal group e.g. Women's group/church	1	1	1	–	1	*	1	–
Voluntary organisation e.g. Pre School Alliance	*	1	–	*	*	*	*	*
At home – structured correspondence course or open learning	5	7	5	3	3	4	5	6
At home – informal learning/ from book	10	13	8	10	9	5	14	3
At home – from TV/radio	1	1	*	*	2	*	1	–
Other educational institution	3	4	4	4	2	2	5	9
Other	6	9	5	5	5	5	7	5
Don't know	*	*	1	*	1	*	1	*

Table 34: Length of time learners have been studying their main subject

	1990	1996 Total	1996 16-54	SCPR*
Base – all current/recent learners = 100%	1,195	1,892	1,656	1,023
Less than 1 week		3	3	29
1 week – 1 month	17	5	5	6
Over 1-3 months		7	7	9
Total – up to 3 months	17	15	15	44
Over 3-6 months	21	16	18	17
7-12 months	10	11	11	
Over 1-2 years	16	20	21	15
Over 2 years	28	35	32	
Don't know/can't remember	7	3	3	22

* based on learning episodes, not learners

The importance of qualifications

The National Targets for Education and Training

The UK is increasingly focusing on the achievement of the National Targets for Education and Training, and funding mechanisms are designed to encourage the provision of vocational and qualification-led courses, with specific tax concessions for individual learners. *Lifetime Learning: A Policy Framework* (DfEE, 1996) notes that £21.2 million was claimed in tax relief for vocational learning in 1995-6. Table 35 shows that 73% of current/recent learners in the labour force age group and 65% of learners in the adult population are aiming for one of a wide array of qualifications. There is still a very wide variety of work-related qualifications, and while some sectors and employers, particularly large ones, have adopted NVQs, many other sectors and employers are continuing to use existing qualifications such as BTEC, City & Guilds and RSA which they believe are more applicable to their needs, or with which they are more familiar. The relatively low level of reported take-up for courses leading directly to NVQs or SVQs, or to GNVQs or GSVQs suggests that there is still some way to go to familiarise people with the national vocational qualifications framework and to encourage them to adopt it. This lack of knowledge has been reported elsewhere, for example in the Employment Department-commissioned study *Skill needs of small firms in Britain 1994/5* (PAS, 1995). While 60% of employers in their sample had heard of NVQs, only 21% offered them to employees, and for small firms, the figure was down to 13%. The main reasons for not offering NVQs were that they were not seen to be needed to do the job (33%), that the employer had insufficient knowledge of them (18%), they did not match their requirements (17%) or that the relevant ones were not available (13%). The Open College has commented that it finds it more fruitful to offer training materials for the existing qualifications that a company is already familiar with than to assume that all companies are converting, or will convert, to NVQs.

Qualifications aimed for

In the light of the revised and ambitious NTET targets, it is encouraging that nearly three-quarters of current/recent learners in the labour force age group are aiming for a qualification, and that the figure for the adult population is as high as two-thirds. However, it is necessary to remember that current/recent learners form only 40% of the adult population, and 51% of the

labour force age group in the survey, and it is the non-learners who have to be encouraged to cross the learning divide if the target of 60% of the workforce attaining NVQ level 3 or equivalent by the year 2000 is to be reached. In particular, it will be necessary to encourage such developments as the accreditation of prior experiential learning in industry and among women returners to the work-force if these numbers are to be reached. Women require and use a variety of routes to education progression such as those provided through access courses, OCN networks and adult education courses. Research shows the importance of entering or re-entering education and training through general study in order to develop a basis for later vocational learning (McGivney, 1994).

Table 35: Qualifications, if any, which learners are/were aiming for

	1996 Adult population	1996 16-54	1993 SCPR
Base – all current/ recent learners = 100%	1,892	1,656	1,023
None/not aiming for qualification	35	27	61
GCSE	2	4	1
A level, A/S level, S level	5	7	1
YTS certificate	–	–	*
RSA/Pitmans	3	3	2
City and Guilds	5	5	5
National or general BTEC/ONC or OND	2	2	2
NVQ/SVQ Level 1 or equivalent	3	3	4
NVQ/SVQ Level 2 or equivalent	5	5	
NVQ/SVQ Level 3 or equivalent	2	2	
NVQ/SVQ Level 4 or equivalent	1	1	
GNVQ/GSVQ Level 1 or equivalent	*	1	*
GNVQ/GSVQ Level 2 or equivalent	*	1	
GNVQ/GSVQ Level 3 or equivalent	1	1	
GNVQ/GSVQ Level 4 or equivalent	*	1	
Higher BTEC, HND	2	2	1
Nursing qualification	2	2	1
Teaching qualification (including TEFL)	1	1	1
Undergraduate degree	13	14	2
Diploma	5	5	
Higher degree (e.g. PhD)	2	3	1
Other professional qualification	13	13	15

* based on learning episodes, not learners

Table 36: Highest qualification held, by employment status and 16-54 age group

	1996 16-54	1996 Total	full-time	part-time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired	Student
Base – all respondents = 100%	3,255	4,673	1,721	587	458	563	1,077	261
Apprenticeship	2	3	3	*	3	*	5	–
GCSE/O levels/CSE	28	21	22	28	26	28	7	33
A Levels/Highers, A/S Level/S Level	11	9	9	7	8	7	3	40
YTS	*	*	–	–	*	*	–	–
RSA/Pitmans	3	3	1	7	2	5	3	1
City & Guilds	7	6	9	4	9	4	3	1
BTEC First/Scotvec	2	1	1	1	1	1	*	3
ONC/OND/BTEC National	2	2	3	*	2	*	1	3
National Vocational Qualification Level 1	1	1	1	1	2	*	–	*
National Vocational Qualification Level 2	2	1	2	1	3	1	1	–
National Vocational Qualification Level 3	1	*	1	*	*	*	–	–
National Vocational Qualification Level 4	*	*	*	*	*	*	–	*
HNC/HND	1	1	2	*	1	–	1	*
Nursing qualifications	2	2	2	4	–	2	3	–
Undergraduate degree	9	8	12	7	4	4	6	5
Diploma	4	4	6	4	2	4	4	3
Post grad/higher degree (e.g. MA)	2	2	3	1	2	1	1	2
Other qualifications	6	8	8	8	3	4	14	2
All holding educational qualification(s)	81	72	85	73	68	62	52	95
None	19	28	15	27	32	38	48	5

The differences between the 1996 labour force and the adult population are not marked. Two per cent more of the younger group are aiming for GCSEs and A levels. Respondents are studying across the whole spread of qualifications. The two largest categories recorded are university degrees and professional qualifications.

The comparison with the SCPR survey is particularly interesting. Far fewer learning episodes

overall are directed towards a qualification (39%) in the SCPR survey, but the proportions aiming at City and Guilds and other professional qualifications are similar. The 1996 survey includes many more (12% compared with 2%) of current/recent learners aiming for GCSEs or A levels and also many more aiming at undergraduate degrees or diplomas (19% compared with 2%). The 1996 survey also records what is likely to be a real increase in NVQs (from 4% to 11%) and GNVQs now rate 4%.

Qualifications attained

Also, all respondents were therefore asked, but not until later in the questionnaire:

> What is the highest level of examination or qualification that you now hold, including any that you may have gained since leaving full-time education?

There is a clear relationship between the possession of educational qualifications and employment status. Though the Employment Policy Institute reported that graduate unemployment had increased from 4.5% in Spring 1989 to 10.4% in 1992, it has now been falling again. However, the unemployment rate for 22-25-year-olds with no qualifications rose from 22.1% in 1989 to 24.9% in 1992, and to 28.2% in 1995. Unemployment among graduates of all ages is only 3.6% compared with 7% in the population as a whole and 11.8% of the unskilled (Cooper, Y., *The Independent*, 9/8/1996).

The learning environment

Funding of learning

There continue to be a number of factors which affect people's ability to enter into and engage with learning, and also which affect people's ability to learn successfully. The need for a supportive learning environment is increasingly understood, though providers' ability to deliver it varies. A basic barrier to access continues to be that of finance, and a clearer understanding of this issue is required if the individuals most in need are to be helped. For some people, the cost of the fees is a major barrier, and while the majority of full-time students have their tuition fees paid, part-time students, including, for example, those studying through the Open University, have to pay their own. However, one-quarter of all learning attracts no fees, predominantly that learning which is informal, home-based or provided through voluntary organisations or subsidised in some way. Thirty-nine per cent of retired people describe their learning as having no fees, as do 30% of unskilled manual workers and pensioners (DEs), with whom there is clearly an overlap.

Women are less likely than men (10% compared to 15%) to have outside fees paid for them by employers, and are less likely to receive employer-funded provision of learning. When compared with professional groups and with skilled manual workers, women again fare less well on these indices. Almost twice as many full-time as part-time employees will get employer support for outside fees. Women and the upper middle classes are more likely to pay fees themselves, or to find the money from family or relatives. The highest proportion where self/family pay fees are the retired (49%), those not working (46%) and those working part-time (46%), particularly women – a finding confirmed in *Wasted Potential* (McGivney, 1994) and in the 1994 CBI report. Only small proportions record assistance through Government training schemes, 2% for example reporting funds from Employment Training/Training for Work. This proportion rises to 5% among the unemployed.

More women than men are in receipt of government or local authority grants, confirming the increase in women in higher education and probably the significance of care and social work professional areas. The social class group benefiting most from government or local authority grants are those from white-collar backgrounds (C1s).

Table 37: Sources used for payment of fees, by gender, social class and employment status

	All	Men	Women	AB	C1	C2	DE
Base – all current/recent learners =100%	1,892	982	910	508	656	364	365
No fees	25	25	22	22	21	27	30
Self/family/relative	33	30	37	42	32	29	25
Employer/potential employer paid outside fees	13	16	10	15	13	17	7
Employer-funded provision of learning	7	8	5	9	8	6	5
Training for Work/ET	2	2	1	1	1	3	3
Training Credit	*	1	*	1	*	1	1
Other government or local authority organisation	19	16	21	13	23	15	24
Charitable Trust or other non-governmental organisation	1	1	2	1	1	1	2
Other	2	2	3	2	3	2	4
Don't know	3	3	3	2	3	2	4

	All	full-time	part-time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired	Student
Base – all current/recent learners = 100%	1892	853	246	180	133	220	259
No fees	25	19	24	28	28	39	21
Self/family/relative	33	33	40	17	46	49	16
Employer/potential employer paid outside fees	13	23	12	7	3	2	*
Employer-funded provision of learning	7	13	5	2	3	2	*
Training for Work/ET	2	2	2	5	1	1	*
Training Credit	*	*	1	2	1	–	1
Other government or local authority organisation	19	10	16	34	15	4	54
Charitable trust or other non-governmental organisation	1	1	1	2	4	1	1
Other	2	2	1	4	1	2	6
Don't know	3	2	3	3	4	2	4

The SCPR survey shows 43% of learning episodes funded by employers in some way or other, more than double the proportion (20%) indicated by current/recent learners in 1996, and far fewer with fees paid by learners or their families (19% compared with 33%). The SCPR figure for 'no fees' was also somewhat higher (30% compared with 25%). Consistent with learning for longer periods and aiming to gain more qualifications, the 1996 qualification shows 19% in receipt of local authority or other national grants compared with 6% in the SCPR survey.

Part-time learning brings costs other than tuition fees and respondents were asked to identify these. Table 38 highlights the significant incidence of equipment costs (42%), particularly mentioned by those who are working part-time and those who are not working. Travel costs (38%) are noted as a problem by those who are working part-time. The extra costs of child care do not rank high overall but are mentioned more by women than by men (3% compared with 1%) and this rises to 4% among those respondents with children 5-15 in their household and to 8% among those with children aged 0-4. It is of course often the basic availability of appropriate child care rather than its actual cost which causes problems. It is probable that the people who could not afford the costs of child care are not able currently to participate in learning, and the reasons given for not learning nowadays confirm this (Table 38).

Loss of wages is mentioned particularly by the 20-24s (10%) and the C1s (7%). There is probably an overlap between these groups and they are most likely to be studying for work-related reasons. Travel costs are mentioned most by the two younger groups, 40% of 17-19 year-olds and 44% of 20-24 year-olds. Costs of equipment feature, interestingly, at both ends of the age spectrum. The two younger groups both mention cost of equipment particularly: 48% of the 17-19s and 54% of the 20-24s. At the older end, similarly 46% of 55-64s and 50% of 65-74s also mention cost of equipment. Since over 10% more of the AB and the C1s mention costs of equipment than the blue-collar workers, it is reasonable to suggest that the older learners are talking about computer equipment.

The fact that the younger groups mention all the main extra costs at a higher rate, and are, of course, still earning low salaries is an issue likely to prove a barrier for some learners.

A comparison with the SCPR survey again reflects its workplace-related and employer-supported emphasis. It records less in the way of 'other costs of study', 59% of learning episodes incur no other costs. Costs of travel affect fewer episodes/people, 25% compared with 32%, and cost of equipment affects only 24% compared with 42%.

Travel time and distance

Geographical accessibility is another important issue, particularly for part-time learners who may be fitting in their learning around their job and other family commitments. The availability of appropriate transport as well as the time taken to travel also has to be taken into account. A

Table 38: Other costs of learning, by employment status

	All	full-time	part-time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired	Student
Base – all current/ recent learners =100%	1,892	853	246	180	133	220	259
No other costs	41	48	38	47	42	36	22
Cost of equipment	42	36	41	33	41	47	64
Travel costs	32	27	38	31	30	29	48
Lost wages/salary	5	4	7	3	1	–	12
Cost of child care	2	1	4	1	5	–	2
Lost over-time wages	2	3	1	1	–	–	3
Loss of benefits	1	*	*	2	–	–	3
Other costs	5	5	1	5	5	4	7
Don't know	2	2	3	1	2	3	1

main reason for people choosing to study through the Open University has been that it overcomes such barriers. Ideally every community of any size would contain within it a local learning centre of some sort or other, since it is not possible any longer to assume that there is appropriate public transport or that people are prepared to go far on their own in the evenings. In the US, continuing education planners assume that 45 minutes' journey time is the maximum that can be expected of learners, but the US is a country with more cars, and in which more people are in the habit of driving longer distances.

More than a quarter of current/recent learners do not have to travel as they are either learning at home or at work, and this figure rises to nearly one-third among those working full-time and studying at work and also to one-third of the retired who are, by reverse, learning at home. Fifteen per cent only travel up to a mile, a further 20% travelling 1-3 miles and a further 20% travelling between 4 to 10 miles. Only 17% have to travel 11 miles or more. What is more surprising is that fewer people living in Scotland (20%) and Wales (13%) learn at home. They also record higher proportions at the other end of the spectrum with 22% in Wales and 21% in Scotland travelling 11 miles or more.

The SCPR survey shows as many as 44% not having to travel, emphasising again the concentration on workplace-related learning.

For part-time learners, time available for study presents a difficulty and also has an opportunity cost. Table 39 shows the time cost of their journeys to the learners. Nearly one-half spend less than 30 minutes on their journey and only just under 10% spend 50 minutes or more. More

Table 39: Distance of travel to place of learning, by employment status

	All	full-time	part-time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired	Student
Base – all current/ recent learners = 100%	1,892	853	246	180	133	220	259
No distance/learn at home/work	26	32	20	26	30	32	4
Up to 1 mile	15	12	17	13	22	13	26
1-3 miles	20	16	24	23	17	23	25
4-6 miles	11	10	10	15	16	9	14
6-10 miles	9	8	12	12	5	6	8
11-15 miles	5	4	8	1	3	3	11
15-50 miles	8	9	6	9	3	7	9
51 miles & over	4	6	2	1	1	3	1
Abroad	*	*	–	–	–	–	*
Can't say	2	2	1	1	3	4	2

women have shorter journeys than men: 40% of women's journeys are less than 20 minutes compared with 30% of men's. It is difficult to interpret this sort of information satisfactorily. At the lower end, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have more people with shorter journeys of up to 30 minutes. At the upper end, Scotland has more people with longer journeys of 50 minutes or over.

Clearly most existing learners are not facing very long journeys. However, this finding raises the opposite question as to whether or not it is only people who have access to learning sufficiently near their homes who are able to become learners. It is possible that many without easy access are, by definition, excluded.

Current and recent learners were also asked whether they had completed their learning, whether they were still studying or whether they had given up studying before its end. This question had also been asked in the 1994 survey, and although the proportions dropping out during a course are not large, the reasons do provide a different perspective on learners' reactions to the courses on offer. Problems and barriers to access are often encountered before or very early on rather than during studies. Slightly more women than men gave up their course without completing it.

Table 40: Time taken to travel to place of learning, by gender and nation

	All	Men	Women	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Base – all current/ recent learners = 100%	1,892	982	910	1,612	35	158	86
Under 10 minutes	11	10	12	11	11	10	12
10-19 minutes	24	20	28	23	28	24	32
20-29 minutes	13	12	14	13	13	18	11
30-39 minutes	11	10	12	10	13	12	15
40-49 minutes	7	8	5	7	5	6	7
50 minutes or more	9	9	9	9	8	11	6
Not applicable, learn at home/work	25	30	21	27	22	18	16

Table 41: Proportion of current/recent learners giving up before the end of the course, by gender

	All	Men	Women
Base – all current/ recent learners = 100%	1,892	982	910
Completed the course	35	34	36
Gave up before the end	6	5	8
Still studying	58	60	55

Reasons for giving up courses

Devising questions and interpreting the answers about dropping out or withdrawing from courses is never easy. There is a vast literature on the subject. An obvious difficulty relates to people offering life or work-related reasons for dropping out rather than academic or educational ones. However, for adults studying part-time, external pressures are often great. What is interesting, even from this small group, is the wide variety of reasons given and the fact that even with an extended list, the group of other miscellaneous answers is also high. The 1994 survey asked the question of all respondents about all the studies or courses they may have taken. Though the 1996 survey used the same question wording, it only asked the question of current/recent learners.

Grouping the 1996 reasons into categories which are to do with the course and its content and the answers which are to do with external pressures produces roughly one-third commenting on

Table 42: Reasons for giving up before finishing the course

	1994 All	1996 All	1996 Men	1996 Women
Base – All who gave up studying before the end of any courses	594			
Base: All current/recent learners who gave up their course = 100%		122	52	69
Cost/financial pressures	4	13	17	9
Too difficult/level set to high	10	3	2	3
Not demanding enough/level set too low	3	1	2	–
Course was closed down	1	5	9	3
Problems with childcare	2	4	–	5
Pressures of work/job change	9	14	20	10
Pressures of family commitments	8	11	5	16
Work/family pressures of time	7		NR	
Poor facilities on course	1	3	2	4
Moved away	3	1	2	1
Lost interest/got bored	17	8	7	8
Course not suitable	NR	7	9	7
Learned as much as I wanted	1	5	2	8
Dislike tutor/teacher/other people on course	5	3	5	2
Changed to another course	3	–	–	–
Found I did not have time	5	7	11	5
Health reasons	NR	8	6	9
Other reasons	34	23	24	19
Don't know/can't remember	2	6	5	6

intrinsic issues and two-thirds on external pressures (see Table 42). Issues to do with the level of the course and its suitability, and with the course organisation, should be able to be improved by better course provision. Better advice and guidance can also help in making judgements about suitable courses and deciding how best to cope with external pressures. Two answers stand out in the comparison with the numbers from the wider group of respondents in 1994. In 1994, as many as 10% say that the course was too difficult, that the level was set too high and 17% said that they lost interest/got bored. One other specific answer was recorded in 1996, at 7%, that the course was not suitable, again an argument for better guidance.

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Table 43: Main things preventing learning nowadays

	1994 All respondents	1996 All not learning currently	Men	Women	Recent learners	Past learners	None since full-time education
Base – all respondents = 100%	4,041						
Base – all not learning currently = 100%		3,599	1,695	1,904	818	1,086	1,696
Not interested/don't want to	21	28	30	27	7	25	41
Cost/money	16	10	9	11	8	13	9
Child care arrangements/ other dependants	12	9	2	16	5	10	11
Transport/too far to travel	4	2	2	3	1	4	2
I don't like being in groups of people I don't know	1	1	1	1	–	1	1
I don't know what is available	2	2	2	2	1	2	2
Work/other time pressures	26	16	16	16	13	23	14
I feel I am too old/too ill/disabled	20	15	15	16	2	17	20
Worried about being out alone	2	1	*	2	1	2	1
Don't feel anything prevents me	9	5	7	4	5	7	4
Haven't got round to doing it	8	8	8	8	6	9	8
Don't feel colleges, centres are welcoming	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
No suitable courses available	3	2	2	1	2	2	1
I do not have the qualifications I need	–	1	1	1	1	1	1
I do not have the abilities I need	–	1	*	1	–	1	1
I am too nervous about the idea of starting learning	–	2	1	3	1	2	3
I would not be able to get time off work	–	3	4	3	2	4	4
I've tried to learn in the past and it has been unsuccessful	–	1	1	1	*	1	1
Other	6	4	4	4	3	5	4
Don't know	6	19	22	17	56	10	8

Major external factors mentioned are the typical ones: pressure of work/job change (14%), costs/financial pressures (13%) and pressure of family commitments (11%). Adult learners, mainly studying part-time, have to fit their learning into the corners of the rest of their lives. As with correspondence education, the main point at which learners drop out is within the first few weeks or term of a course. It is not realistic to be too cynical about this. Other research evidence, for example from the Open University, confirms that such extrinsic reasons rank higher among early drop-outs.

Other barriers to learning

While the previous table looks at reasons which have prevented people from completing their studies, the numbers of people who find such reasons a barrier to starting learning and never get to begin their studies is a much more significant group. All respondents who were not currently learning were asked what were the main things that prevented them learning these days (see Table 43). Many of the answers record similar pressures, whether or not they have actually been experienced in relation to previous studies or whether they are feared in anticipation. Taking all respondents who are not currently learning suggests that the most common barrier to learning nowadays is lack of interest, but, of course many of those who say this are older people who are much less likely to return to learning.

There is always a sizeable group of people who are generally not interested in learning or 'do not want to learn these days'. Its size is heavily age-related, increasing from around 1 in 4 (25%) of people in their middle years to 40% of people who are 55 and over. Some other older people spell this out more precisely: 37% of 65-74 year-olds and 48% of people 75 and over say they feel they are too old, too ill or too disabled. The dominant issues for all but older people are more practical and represent real barriers to learning. Work and other time pressures are dominant for the 25-44 year-olds. Cost/money is most important for the three youngest age groups, particularly 20-24 year-olds (20%). Child care arrangements are the main barrier for 25-34 year-olds (25%). Sixteen per cent of all women quote childcare arrangements or care for other dependants, as do 40% of respondents with children 0-4 and 23% of respondents with children 5-15 in the household. It is clear that it is the availability of appropriate child care arrangements that is the issue, and not just its cost as noted earlier. Around 10% of people in mid-career say they haven't got round to it.

Perhaps the most interesting comparison is between recent and past learners, in order to see which people could be encouraged back into learning. While 9 out of 10 past or non-learners explain their reasons, less than one half of recent learners give any such reasons and do not appear currently to place themselves outside the barriers to learning.

Recent learners, who are not learning now, say that the main reasons preventing them from learning nowadays are work and other time pressures (13%), followed by cost/money (8%), not interested/don't know (7%), haven't got round to it (6%) and child care arrangements (5%).

Those who have studied in the past again put work/other time pressures highest (23%), followed by feeling they are too old/ill, etc (17%), cost/money (13%) child care arrangements (10%) and haven't got round to it (9%). The main reasons among those who have never studied since leaving full-time education, apart from just not being interested, are that they are too old/ill (20%), work/other time pressures (14%) and child care arrangements (11%).

Given the difficulty of obtaining and interpreting answers to this type of question, respondents were offered an extended list of answers to choose from rather than forcing them into a limited number of categories. While the majority of the answers as Table 43 shows did not generate many responses it is important to have been able to check whether or not many of the latent, more attitudinal, hypotheses are worth pursuing further. One which is somewhat encouraging is the response that people haven't got round to it. At least this reaction is not actively negative, although this may just be a form of politeness.

Table 44 brings together the main reasons given for not learning nowadays analysed by people's employment status. Not surprisingly, work and other time pressures bear most heavily on those in work, whether full- or part-time. The unemployed are most affected by cost. Those not working and working part-time, many of whom will have young children, have problems with child care. A small but key group of those in work say they would not be able to get time off work.

Table 44: Main* things preventing learning nowadays, by employment status

	Total population	full-time	part-time	Unemployed	Not working	Retired	16-54 age group
Base – all not learning now = 100%	3,599	1,270	473	390	506	947	2,303
Not interested/don't want to	28	23	23	25	29	39	22
Work/other time pressures	16	26	26	6	11	6	21
Too old/ill/ disabled	15	5	7	10	11	38	4
Cost/money	10	10	10	22	13	5	13
Childcare arrangements/ other arrangements	9	4	16	8	33	2	14
Haven't got round to doing it	8	8	10	11	8	5	9
I would not be able to get the time off work	3	8	4	1	–	–	5

*main mentions only

People's individual environment

Finally, in the chapter on the learning environment, it is interesting to look at the impact of the more personal environment of individuals and their families. For example, there is some research evidence which indicates that a major life change may be a trigger for adult learning, and though this is not an easy area to ask about, it was decided to offer respondents a list of statements of personal and family circumstances and ask them if any of these statements applied to their recent or current situation. They were not specifically asked if the circumstances had any relationship to their learning. However, the pattern shown in Table 45 is interesting and it is reasonable to infer that some relationships exist.

It is interesting to look at some examples. The circumstance experienced by the highest proportion was moving house/home (13%), of whom 59% were current/recent learners. A quite similar proportion (11%) had an illness, but only 32% (around half the number) were current/recent learners. Nearly half of those who wanted to help their children to learn were now learning themselves and 71% of those who wanted promotion at work were learning themselves.

Five of the listed circumstances are related to groups with higher proportions of current/recent learners than in the total adult population. Interestingly, early retirement does not link to a higher level of participation in learning, though at 33%, it is higher than the current/recent rate of learning for 55/64 year-olds (25%) and the rate for people who are retired (20%). This area of work looks a fruitful one for further qualitative research.

Table 45: Relationship of participation in study to recent life experiences

	All to whom statement applies	Percentage of group who are current/recent learners
Base – all respondents = 100%	4,673	40
I have moved home/away	13	59
I had an illness	11	32
I have started a family	8	39
I have been involved in a broken marriage/ broken up with my partner	7	45
I wanted to help my children to learn	7	48
I have taken early retirement	7	33
I have lost my job	7	45
I wanted promotion at work	7	71
None of these	52	39

Attitudes to learning and future plans for learning

Attitudes to learning

As noted in Chapter 1, there is increasing interest in qualitative as well as quantitative research in the area of lifetime learning. A main reason for this is government's clear policy that adults and their employers, if they have one, need to pay a significant share of the cost of their learning rather than expecting the community to support it, as society does for younger people. What is less well understood is what motivates some people to want to continue to learn, while others do not, and what makes some people think that learning is worth paying for, while others do not.

The series of Employment Department-funded Individual Commitment studies, both national and for local TECs, included extensive series of attitudes scales concerning attitudes to schooling, attitudes to learning and training as adults and attitudes to work. Experience has shown that a number of the attitude statements represent some of the main clusters of attitudes which are of particular interest to policy makers and a number of the key ones were selected for inclusion in this study. Table 46 takes those people who agree or strongly agree with the statements recorded and analyses them by their current learning status. It compares the 1996 labour market age group with the SCPR sample, and adds the overall adult population for 1996 as a reference point. As always, there is unqualified general support for learning as something people do throughout their lives, in the sense of general approval of 'motherhood and apple pie'. The same general approval emerges from the recent MORI poll undertaken for the Campaign for Learning which focused particularly on attitudes to learning. This high level of approval is clearly at a general societal level and does not show any difference between different categories of learners. Neither does it relate strongly to likely future learning activity.

Table 46 shows reasonable stability in attitudes towards learning, both between the 1996 adult population and the labour force age group in 1996, and between that group and the SCPR group. The rank order of the proportions 'agreeing strongly / agreeing' with the given statement is identical across the three samples.

The one attitude statement new in 1996 shows an important difference between the 16-54s and the national sample in that 10% more of the labour force group (84% compared with 74%)

Table 4.6: Proportion agreeing strongly/agreeing with given statement

	Adult population	Total 16-54	1996 16-54s: Current learners	Recent leaners	Past learners	None since full-time	Full-time students	SCPR	SCPR: Learners	Non-learners	Full-time students
Base – all respondents in specified group = 100%	4,673	3,255	952	704	637	962	320	1,403	680	617	105
Learning is something people do throughout their lives	93	94	97	96	96	90	95	95	94	96	97
I am confident about learning new skills	74	84	95	92	86	68	96		Not asked		
People who get training find their jobs are more interesting	72	69	78	76	67	60	72	67	71	63	56
People who get trained at work end up with better promotion or better pay	70	68	72	66	68	68	73	56	56	57	56
There is not enough help and advice available about the different sorts of learning people do	47	51	54	49	47	51	54	41	41	44	32
I don't see why I should pay for learning that is to do with my job or career	44	48	43	42	46	56	47	39	36	43	36
People should not be expected to learn new skills for their career in their own time	31	32	25	29	32	40	25	18	18	20	13

agree that they are confident about learning new skills. Among people who have never studied since the end of their full-time education, the proportion drops to 68%.

While all three groups show similar levels of agreement that people who get training find their jobs more interesting, the 1996 labour force age group ranks the three negative statements higher than the SCPR survey. 'That there is not enough help and advice available about the different sorts of learning people do' (10 points higher) and 'I don't see why I should pay for learning that is to do with my job or career' (11 points higher). The third negative statement, 'People should not be expected to learn new skills for their career in their spare time', has gained even more agreement (14 points higher).

Overall trends, therefore, are disappointingly negative. Against this there is an encouraging substantial increase, from 56% to 68% in agreement with the positive statement that 'People who get trained at work end up with better promotion or better pay'. The inference appears to be that though people agree with the negative arguments in principle, they may be increasingly prepared to take a positive view for themselves.

Future plans for learning

It is always more difficult to ask people about their future intentions than about past practices, as people's attitudes, motivation and circumstances change over time. However, asking the same, or similar questions over time, though not providing quantitative marketing data does provide an indication of trends among different types of people.

This series of surveys has continued to try to identify future and unmet needs for learning, coming at the question in slightly different ways, but essentially asking the same question. In 1980 and 1990, the question asked about subjects people would like to learn about, but had not been able to, trying to identify latent demand. In 1980, 61% had indicated they would like to learn about something, but in 1990, the figure had dropped to 47%. In 1994 and 1996 a more simple and general question was asked and it appears to have produced quite stable results compared with the previous question, complicated since it had included the concept 'that they had not been able to'. The question used in 1994 and 1996 was:

> What, if anything, would you be most interested in learning about if you could?

The overall proportions of different groups giving subjects they would like to learn about are very similar in 1996 to the proportions in 1994, as Table 47 shows. The main differences are an increase in the proportions indicating subjects among the younger age group, the 20-24s, and in the oldest age group of 65 and over. The other, and more surprising one, is an increase in indicating subjects among DEs and a decrease among the ABs (both of 6%).

Table 47: Proportions giving subjects they would like to learn, 1994 and 1996 compared

	1996	1994
All respondents	69	67
Gender		
Male	69	67
Female	69	68
Age		
17-19	74	76
20-24	80	75
25-34	77	79
35-44	76	74
45-54	71	68
55-64	63	62
65-74	57	47
75 and over	46	
Social class		
AB	74	80
C1	72	71
C2	67	67
DE	65	58
Learning status		
Current	77	77
Recent	80	84
Past	74	77
None since full-time education	56	57
Terminal age of education		
Under 16	58	56
16-17	72	72
18 and over	80	82

NB Percentages are based horizontally on the total in the named group

Subjects of future study

Table 48 is based on the total adult population and shows the proportion of people who are interested in future learning, and naming their subjects of interest. In terms of learning status, recent rather than current learners indicate the highest interest in learning future subjects with 80% of recent learners specifying subjects compared with 77% of current learners and 74% of past learners. A closer assessment of learner interest, which provides some guide as to market potential, is given by the analysis of subjects specified by those who are very likely or fairly likely to learn in the next three years, 87% of whom name likely subjects.

Apart from computer studies (15%) and foreign languages (14%), the profile of subjects is wide, with no other subject rating more than 6%, as Table 48 shows. It is the absence of interest or very

low responses to some subjects which is more of a cause for concern: engineering, science / maths, car maintenance, carpentry, accountancy, dressmaking and law all rank at less than 3% overall.

Table 48: Subjects people are interested in learning about in the future by learning status and future learning intention

	Total	Current learners	Recent learners	Past learners	None since full-time education	Future learning in next three years: Likely	Future learning in next three years: Unlikely
Base – all respondents = 100%	4,673	1,073	808	1,086	1,696	1,777	2,896
Computer studies	11	10	12	14	10	15	9
Foreign languages	11	12	14	13	7	14	9
Business/administration/ management	4	6	5	4	3	6	3
Cookery/catering	4	3	4	3	4	4	4
History/local history	4	6	4	5	2	5	3
Music	4	4	3	4	3	4	3
Nursing/health studies	3	4	4	4	3	5	2
Social sciences	3	6	5	3	2	6	2
Social work/services/care	3	4	3	3	2	5	2
Handicrafts	3	2	3	4	3	4	3
Painting/pottery/sculpture	3	4	3	4	2	4	3
Other professional qualifications	3	4	4	2	2	5	2
Other vocational qualifications	3	4	4	3	2	4	2
Other academic subjects	3	3	3	3	1	4	2
Other leisure subjects	6	7	6	7	4	6	5
All naming subjects*	69	77	80	74	56	87	58
None/nothing	31	23	20	26	44	13	42

Note: Subjects rating 3% or more only listed

Finally in this section, Table 49 compares the subjects specified as of interest in 1996 and 1994, contrasting men's and women's choices. This table is based only on those who were definite about their subjects of interest, rather than just saying they would be interested in learning in principle. As before, the range of subjects listed is very wide, and grouping them is not easy. Social sciences have been grouped with social work and the care sector, but apart from that the list is as recorded.

Table 49: Subjects people areinterested in learning about in the future

	1996			1994		
	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women
Base – all interested in learning named subjects = 100%	3,224	1,566	1,658	2,727	1,285	1,442
Computer studies	16	18	15	14	17	12
Foreign languages	16	17	15	15	16	15
Social studies/social work/ community care	9	6	12	5	2	7
Business/admin./management	6	7	4	6	6	7
Accountancy	3	3	3		NSR	
Other professional qualifications	4	5	4	10	7	12
Other vocational qualifications	4		5		NSR	
Cultural subjects and history	6	6	5	4	4	4
Cookery/catering	5	3	7	5	2	7
Creative arts: painting, sculpture, pottery	5	3	6	3	3	4
Music: learn an instrument, singing	5	7	4	3	4	2
Nursing, health studies, first-aid	5	2	6	4	1	6
English/reading/writing	4	2	6	5	4	5
Handicrafts	4	1	6	5	1	8
Engineering	3	6	*	4	8	*
Physical sports	3	4	2	2	2	2
Dressmaking/needlework	3	*	6	2	*	3
Gardening/flower-arranging/horticulture	3	3	4	2	3	2
Car maintenance	3	5	1	4	6	1
Photography	2	4	1	1	2	*
Carpentry/DIY	2	4	1	3	5	1
Law	2	3	2		NSR	
Secretarial/office subjects	2	*	3	2	*	4
Mathematics/science	2	2	1	2	3	2
Building trades	1	1	1	1	2	*
Religion/theology	1	1	1	1	*	1
Dance	1	1	1	*	*	1
Other subjects	12	13	11	20	19	20

It is encouraging that with some obvious exceptions, the gender discrimination in subject choice is not strong, especially in the two main areas of computer studies and foreign languages, and in the general areas of professional and vocational qualifications. Clearly some subject areas relate to professions which are predominantly occupied by either men or women: examples are health and social care which are predominantly female and engineering and carpentry which are predominantly male. Other subjects are gender-bound more by cultural habit than due to available occupational opportunities: for example, men mention sports, car maintenance, photography and music more, while women list cookery, catering, dressmaking, creative arts and handicrafts.

The continued wide range of variety of subjects specified poses difficulties for providers either in choosing what areas of provision to specialise in or in maintaining an adequate breadth of provision. It also poses difficulties in marketing such provision. Clearly a potential learner interested in computer studies is not equally interested in languages or the creative arts. Many of the categories listed in Table 49 themselves unpack into a large number of individual subjects as Chapter 11 which looks at arts and crafts in more detail shows; that study separately records 20 arts and crafts (Sargant, 1996).

Marketing models

The Campaign for Learning, as noted in Chapter 1, is taking the issue of marketing as its major priority, and has developed a Campaign Marketing Strategy and Implementation Plan based on findings both of quantitative research carried out by MORI and qualitative research carried out by Quadrangle. The MORI quantitative survey described as the 'State of the Nation Poll' was also carried out early in 1996, focusing on attitudinal issues and covered many similar areas documented in previous surveys, the use of leisure, attitudes to learning and its relationship to work, awareness of learning opportunities and future plans for learning.

The aims of the quantitative survey were designed to produce two outcomes:

- a benchmark of individual awareness, experience of and attitudes to learning
- a basis for measurement of achievement of the campaign's objectives over time.

Both the quantitative and qualitative research have informed the development of the Campaign for Learning's marketing and implementation plan, a key feature of which is the development of a segmentation dividing the population into four categories of learner, together with a suggested audience prioritisation of these four groups. Twelve key attitudinal variables were identified from the MORI survey which were used to position adults in one of the four identified segments.

Improvers	Looking to better themselves/improve their position. Opportunities are obvious to them
Strivers	Have aspirations but might not be doing enough to achieve them. In need of direction/help

Drifters	Stuck in a rut, not happy with their lot, but not doing much to change it
Strugglers	Opportunities not obvious, cost perceived as a high barrier to change; disadvantaged in a multitude of ways

Their conclusion was that 'drifters' and 'strivers' should be their target priorities as they were most likely to be influenced by Campaign messages, products and, therefore change their behaviour (Quadrangle, 1996).

A somewhat similar analytical approach had been taken by IFF (1994) as part of its work on Individual Commitment. Using the same battery of 28 attitude scales about learning, training and work as the SCPR study, a factor and cluster analysis was carried out for Merseyside TEC area and this also produced four groupings, described by the research report as 'committed' (21%), potential customers (26%), 'not for me, now' (31%) and outsiders (22%).

Quadrangle's 'improvers' (23%) map across straightforwardly to Merseyside's 'committed' (21%). Their 'strivers' have some similarities with Merseyside's 'potential customers' (26%); however, Merseyside's potential customers are more likely to be male, in lower socio-economic groups, not well-educated and lacking advice/help. They think that colleges are not flexible enough and are afraid of costs. In terms of action, they are noted as a good target for work-related opportunities. Merseyside's largest group (31%), described as 'not for me, now', provides some understanding of the apparent inconsistency found between high levels of approval for learning and lack of current personal interest in it. This group is older, better off, they have learnt in the past, they see no current need for self-improvement, learning is not a problem, they are not insecure and they see no barriers to learning. They map across most closely to Quadrangle's group of 'drifters' but this is too pejorative a word for them.

The fourth Merseyside group, 'outsiders' (22%), most nearly equates to Quadrangle's group of 'strugglers' (25%). They come from all age groups, are not in the labour market, they have left school early, they live in rented property and many have children under 16. They have no opportunity to use skills and do not even know there are barriers to learning. They fall clearly into the European Union's objective of dealing with social exclusion.

To reach such people must be a high priority and requires new and inventive strategies. The evidence of Adult Learners' Weeks over the last 5 years suggests that such strategies are possible, particularly where the media and institutional providers combine forces. A notable illustration of this is the impact of the Week on long-term unemployed people, a group traditionally under-represented in education and training. Leaflets encouraging claimants to phone the free telephone helpline were included in their Girocheques in the two weeks leading up to Adult Learners' Week. Some 50% of callers, in the follow-up research, described themselves as having been unemployed for more than 6 months, and 40% of callers joined a course within four months. The Government's decision to fund a permanent Learning Helpline is a very welcome move in this direction.

The lesson of the current survey is that the UK will only become the learning society envisaged in the National Targets if strategies are adopted which stimulate increased participation amongst all sections of society. This will, of course, involve targeting those most likely to join in, but if the learning divide is to be bridged it will also involve special and different efforts to reach 'outsiders', particularly those of working age and those with young families. Adult Learners' Week, and the BBC/Basic Skills Agency's family literacy campaign offer pointers on how to achieve this. If the nation fails in this task, the learning divide will grow, and new generations will continue to be disadvantaged.

Participation in arts and crafts

The use of leisure time

Most adult learning whether for vocational or more personal reasons is carried out in people's leisure or free time. For this reason, previous studies of adult participation in learning (ACACE, 1982; Sargant, 1991) have framed their questioning within the idea of people's use of leisure and their other cultural and personal activities. Respondents have been asked: 'Apart from television and radio, what are your main leisure time activities and interests?'. This question has been complemented by asking about people's use of externally provided cultural and community facilities, using the general question 'How often do you do any of the following?'.

Leisure, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* reminds us, is 'the opportunity afforded by freedom from occupation'. While for some people this is a positive opportunity, for others who lack money or wish for paid employment, it may well be negative. Increasingly the community divides into those who have over-demanding jobs with too little time for leisure, and those who have (often involuntarily) too much. *Social Trends* (vol. 26, 1996) now recognises *Use of Time* as a relevant social indicator: in an average week people spend 61 hours on sleep, 32 hours on work, study or travel, 16 hours on housework, cooking and shopping, 15 hours on eating, personal hygiene and caring and 4 hours on household maintenance and pet care. This leaves them with 40 hours on average per week of 'free time', estimated at 5 hours a weekday and 8 hours per weekend day. While men working full-time spend 5 hours more a week than women working full-time (53 hours compared with 48 hours), such women spend 8 hours more a week on housework, etc. Men, as a result, end up with more free time at weekends than women.

The ways in which free time is used are varied, particularly between age groups and between men and women. The most common use of free time is watching television or listening to the radio, with people spending an average of 19 hours a week on these activities (in May 1995). Older people spend more time on TV and radio than younger people, while the youngest age group spends more time on eating and drinking out and socialising with friends. The average hours spent on other activities are: 5 hours on visiting friends, 3 hours on reading, 3 hours on talking, socialising and telephoning friends, 3 hours on eating and drinking out, 2 hours on hobbies, games and computing, 2 hours on walks and other recreation, 2 hours doing nothing, 1 hour on sports participation, 1 hour on religious, political or other meetings, less than one hour on

average on concerts, theatre, cinema and sports spectating. It is to be noted that learning or studying, whether formally or informally, does not rate a separate category.

Table 50: Main leisure interests and activities

Main leisure interests/activities	1996 Total	1996 Men	1996 Women	1990 Total	1990 Men	1990 Women
Base – all respondents = 100%	2,022	983	1,039	4,608	2,136	2,472
Physical sports inc. fishing/ walking	39	46	32	40	49	32
Reading	34	28	40	51	40	61
Social activities	28	28	29	46	50	43
Gardening	16	15	18	34	33	34
Sewing/knitting/making clothes	12	*	22	34	24	43
Handicrafts/woodwork/DIY	7	8	7			
Art, painting, pottery, etc.	6	5	7	Not separately recorded		
Indoor games inc. chess/bridge	5	7	4	11	14	9
Listening to music	5	5	4	4	4	3
Voluntary service	5	4	5	9	6	11
Performing music	4	5	4	5	6	3
Studying languages	2	2	2	3	3	3
Committee work	2	2	2	7	7	7
Collecting	1	2	1	5	7	3

For most people an interest in and a love for creative arts and crafts are a valued part of their leisure time, rather than of their work (see Table 50). People are interested in a wide variety of creative arts and crafts, and in a wide variety of ways. Sometimes their interest is of the imagination and creativity, sometimes it involves the practice of particular arts or crafts and sometimes it involves learning its skills.

Many people have not had an adequate arts education when they were younger, and come to such activities later in life, often as the Open College of the Arts notes, 'as something they have always wanted to do'. For others, a pottery or jewellery class leads to a change of career, even setting up a small business. Design and creativity are vital to a flourishing economy, as well as to the nourishment of the spirit. Arts and crafts do not get as good a press as some other more obviously vocational skills, but this is short-sighted. The fact that the Arts Council, as its contribution to 1996 Adult Learners' Week, has provided funding to enable an additional national enquiry into participation and learning in main areas of arts and crafts to run alongside the main DfEE Adult

Learning survey is very helpful and NIACE is grateful for this. This chapter outlines the main findings of this Arts and Crafts survey, for which the Gallup Poll interviewed 2,022 people aged 16 and over between 1-6 February 1996, in England, Scotland and Wales.

Clearly interest and participation in arts and crafts do not emerge as one measurable activity. It is represented for some as work and for others as leisure or education. For yet others it will appear as a hobby or as a spectator event. Between 1980 and 1990, the main changes in leisure interests that emerged were an increase in the proportion naming physical sports, and a decrease in the proportion naming handicrafts, including DIY. Many other activities, eg, gardening, indoor games, voluntary service, collecting, etc, had remained stable. Associated changes in subjects of learning indicated that these changes were more to do with a redefinition of sport as leisure rather than learning, and a redefinition of handicrafts/DIY as a domestic duty rather than as a leisure activity. While some leisure activities such as sports have remained stable between 1990 and 1996, there appear to be other appreciable changes, of which reading, social activities and gardening are the most striking. Arts and cultural activities were not large enough to constitute a separate category in those surveys.

Table 51: Frequency of use of cultural and community facilities

	1996			1990			1980		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Public library visited:									
At least once a week	19	19	19	10	9	10	14	12	16
From once a week to once a month	26	23	29	23	20	26	24	22	27
Less often/never	56	58	52	67	71	64	61	66	57
Cinema visited:									
At least once a week	3	3	2	1	1	1	2	2	1
From once a week to once a month	20	20	19	14	16	12	12	13	10
Less often/never	77	77	78	85	83	87	87	85	89
Theatre visited:									
At least once a week	*	*	*	*	*	1	*	*	*
From once a week to once a month	8	8	8	6	5	7	6	6	6
Less often/never	91	91	91	93	95	92	94	94	94
Concert/opera visited:									
At least once a week	*	*	*	1	1	*	*	1	*
From once a week to once a month	6	7	5	6	8	5	7	7	7
Less often/never	94	93	95	93	92	94	93	93	93
Place of worship:									
At least once a week	13	10	16	13	10	16	13	10	16
From once a week to once a month	10	8	12	9	7	11	10	7	12
Less often/never	77	82	72	78	83	73	77	82	73
Attend sports event:									
At least once a week	9	14	5	8	11	4	na	na	na
From once a week to once a month	17	23	11	13	18	8	na	na	na
Less often/never	74	63	84	79	71	87	na	na	na

* Opera was not included in 1990 and 1980.

Use of cultural and community facilities

It is encouraging, if somewhat surprising, that the use of public libraries appears to have increased again after its drop in 1990 (see Table 51). It is particularly surprising as their funding has been under pressure in many areas. However, many libraries are expanding their services to include CDs, videos and open learning programmes. Since all the other patterns of use and attendance are remarkable stable, it will be necessary to look further for an explanation of this. Cinema visits show an expected increase, with a modest increase in visits to the theatre to be set against a modest decrease in concert-going. It is worth noting the extraordinary stability of attendance at places of worship.

Art galleries and museums

The 1996 survey added questions to cover visits to art galleries and museums and also to local community centres and social clubs (see Table 52). On their own, these figures are hard to interpret. It will be necessary to see what overlapping patterns of attendance further analysis may show. At this stage, we simply note that around 5% to 8% of the adult population regularly visit or attend such cultural events and facilities, going from at least once a week to once a month. This appears to relate sensibly to the overall proportion of 6% of adults (see Table 50) who record creative arts as among their main leisure interests.

Table 52: Frequency of visits to art galleries, museums and community centres

	1996		
	Total	Men	Women
Museum visited:			
At least once a week	1	1	*
From once a week to once a month	8	8	8
Less often/never	92	92	91
Art gallery visited:			
At least once a week	1	1	*
From once a week to once a month	7	6	7
Less often/never	93	93	93
Community centre/social club visited			
At least once a week	13	15	11
From once a week to once a month	12	12	11
Less often/never	75	73	78

Enjoyment of particular arts and crafts

The responses to questions about leisure and arts and culture in general, while providing a framework for understanding the role that such activities play in people's lives, are far too broad to provide any understanding of individuals' interest in and enjoyment of particular arts and crafts. Respondents to the survey were, therefore, shown a list of arts and crafts and asked 'Do you particularly enjoy any of these, and if so, which ones?'. The list was offered in alphabetical order and reversed for half of the sample. Table 53 shows the distribution for men and women and for social

Table 53: Arts and crafts particularly enjoyed

	Total	Men	Women	AB	C1	C2	DE
Base – all respondents = 100%	2,022	983	1,039	421	544	474	582
Film/video	26	27	24	28	28	22	25
Embroidery/sewing/ knitting	20	1	39	18	22	18	22
Photography	19	24	16	26	23	17	13
Writing	15	15	15	21	20	8	12
Music as performer/ playing an instrument	13	15	11	17	16	11	10
Dance	13	8	18	12	16	12	12
Drawing	13	13	11	15	13	9	11
Wood-working	11	20	3	14	9	12	11
Painting, inc. water colour	11	10	11	16	13	7	8
Singing	10	8	11	13	11	6	9
Dressmaking/tailoring	9	1	18	10	11	7	9
Drama	8	7	9	14	10	4	6
Textile art/craft	4	2	6	4	5	4	4
Soft furnishings	4	1	7	4	4	4	4
Pottery/ceramics	4	2	6	3	5	3	3
Patchwork/quilting	3	*	6	3	2	3	4
Collage	3	2	3	4	2	2	2
Jewellery-making	3	1	4	2	3	2	3
Silver/metalwork	2	3	1	2	2	2	3
Sculpture	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Other arts/crafts	5	6	5	5	5	5	5
None of these	27	32	22	22	21	31	31

class. The table shows a high level of enjoyment for a wide variety of arts and crafts. Gender differences are, of course, marked and provide few surprises. The pattern of enjoyment of most of the arts as opposed to crafts show distinct differences between the upper and middle classes (AB and C1) and the skilled manual, unskilled manual workers and pensioners (C2 and DE).

Film/video ranks highest (26%) as the activity particularly enjoyed both by men and women. It is followed by sewing/knitting, at 20% effectively a female pastime. Photography (19%), writing (15%), performing music/playing an instrument (13%), drawing (12%), painting (11%), singing (10%) and drama (8%) feature higher for the upper and middle classes and white collar workers. Bridging the social classes are embroidery and knitting among women, dance which is enjoyed by more women than men, wood-working, particularly among older men, and dress-making among middle-aged women.

Participation in arts and crafts

Table 54 shows the arts and crafts which people regularly take part in, or practise, analysed by age-group. Performing music/playing an instrument ranks highest among the youngest age-group, followed by film/video and writing. The young are also the highest group for singing and dance. Among the 20-24 year-olds, writing and drawing are rated highest followed by film/video and photography. Film/video and photography are the highest for 25-34 year olds. The gender effect places sewing/knitting and embroidery as the highest for all the other age groups.

More positively, the individual arts and crafts in which people are taking part are widely spread across all the age-groups, and while many of them show small percentages, these all represent thousands of individuals.

There is a small number of subjects where the major differences in participation are between men and women: embroidery/sewing/knitting and dress-making are dominated by women, whereas wood-working is dominated by men. More men are taking part in music, while more women take part in dance. Photography and drawing also have a small majority of men. It is only the very large proportion of women engaging in needlework, etc, which gives the impression that women as a whole participate far more than men in arts and crafts taken together.

Social class patterns do not provide an obvious story (Table 55). Among the upper and middle classes (ABs), photography (20%) is followed by writing (15%) then film/video and needlework (both at 13%). Needlework, practised by women, ranks highest for white collar-workers, followed by photography (17%) and film/video and writing, both 14%. Skilled manual workers (C2s) also rank needlework highest (14%) along with photography (11%). After that comes film/video (8%), dance (8%), music (7%) and wood-working (7%). Unskilled workers and pensioners, again a group containing many older women, are dominated by needlework (18%), followed by film/video (10%), writing (8%), and photography and drawing, both at 7%.

Table 54 Arts and crafts which people regularly take part in or practise, by age group

	Total	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
All correspondents = 100%	2,022	140	199	361	356	319	245	264	138
Embroidery/sewing/knitting	16	7	10	12	16	18	23	22	22
Photography	13	9	13	15	13	14	14	15	6
Film/video	11	15	14	16	11	10	7	9	3
Writing	11	15	16	11	10	9	9	9	7
Music as performer/ player	9	22	11	10	9	5	6	8	7
Dance	7	11	10	6	5	6	9	8	7
Drawing	7	12	15	7	7	7	7	4	2
Painting	7	9	9	6	7	6	8	8	5
Wood-working	7	7	5	4	7	9	6	10	4
Singing	6	12	3	6	8	5	8	5	4
Dressmaking/ tailoring	6	3	3	6	6	8	9	5	7
Drama	3	7	5	3	3	2	2	1	1
Soft furnishings	2	1	1	1	3	2	4	3	2
Textile arts/crafts	2	1	2	4	4	1	2	2	1
Patchwork/quilting	2	–	*	1	2	3	2	1	3
Pottery/ceramics	2	3	1	1	3	2	1	*	–
Sculpture	1	3	2	1	2	*	*	*	–
Collage	1	2	2	1	1	*	1	1	–
Jewellery making	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	–	–
Silver/metalwork	1	2	–	*	1	*	1	2	–
Any other arts/ crafts	4	1	5	4	3	7	6	2	5
None of these	44	33	43	46	42	46	41	47	47

Table 55: Arts and crafts which people regularly take part in or practise, analysed by men and women and social class

	Total	Men	Women	AB	C1	C2	DE
Base – all respondents = 100%	2,022	983	1,039	421	544	474	582
Embroidery/sewing/knitting	16	1	31	13	19	14	18
Photography	13	16	10	20	17	11	7
Film/video	11	12	10	13	14	8	10
Writing	11	11	10	15	14	6	8
Music as performer/player	9	11	7	11	12	7	6
Dance	7	5	10	7	8	8	6
Drawing	7	9	6	10	7	5	7
Painting inc. water colour	7	7	7	10	9	5	5
Wood-working	7	13	1	10	5	7	6
Singing	6	6	7	10	7	4	5
Dress-making/tailoring	6	*	11	6	8	4	6
Drama	3	2	3	3	4	2	2
Soft furnishings	2	*	4	2	4	2	1
Textile arts/crafts	2	1	3	3	3	2	2
Patchwork/quilting	2	*	3	2	1	1	2
Pottery/ceramics	2	1	2	1	2	1	1
Sculpture	1	1	1	2	1	*	1
Collage	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Jewellery-making	1	*	1	*	1	1	1
Silver/metal work	1	1	*	1	1	*	*
Any other arts/ crafts	4	5	4	5	4	4	4
All taking part	56	51	61	61	63	52	49
None of these	44	49	39	39	37	48	51

Finally in this section is included a table showing regular participation in arts and crafts by region of England (Table 56). There are surprising large regional differences in overall participation with East Midlands recording the highest proportion, at 71%, regularly taking part in any of the listed activities followed by Yorkshire at 65%. At the lower end are three regions all rating 52%, West Midlands, the North West and the North.

Table 56: Regular participation in arts and crafts by region of England

	London	South East	South West	East Anglia	East Midlands	West Midlands	North West	Yorkshire	North
Base – all respondents =100%	261	385	171	75	145	186	225	178	110
Embroidery/sewing/knitting	13	17	17	18	25	16	13	18	21
Photography	15	13	13	14	16	11	17	16	7
Film/video	11	11	8	12	13	14	8	13	11
Writing	13	10	10	12	12	10	7	16	11
Music as performer	9	10	9	14	9	7	8	15	5
Dance	9	7	5	8	9	5	11	10	3
Drawing	6	7	4	7	12	6	8	11	7
Painting	6	9	10	6	9	7	4	10	5
Wood-working	7	6	8	6	10	6	5	10	9
Singing	7	5	5	6	7	7	7	8	7
Dress-making	6	6	5	9	5	7	6	5	6
Drama	5	2	3	4	2	3	1	2	3
Soft furnishing	2	2	3	3	4	1	2	4	4
Textile arts/crafts	2	1	2	3	2	2	3	2	5
Patchwork	1	2	4	2	4	2	1	1	1
Pottery/ceramics	1	2	1	–	1	2	2	3	2
Sculpture	1	1	*	1	2	–	1	1	1
Collage	2	1	*	–	1	–	*	2	2
Jewellery	1	1	1	1	–	1	1	1	1
Silver/metal works	–	*	1	1	1	1	1	–	1
Other arts/crafts	3	7	1	5	5	2	6	6	6
All taking part	55	57	58	60	71	52	52	65	52
None of these	45	43	42	40	29	48	48	35	48

Needlework (25%) is one activity which puts East Midlands high on the list. It is of course a region with a strong industry and tradition in fine textiles and knitting. It is followed by the North at 21%, with London and the North-West the lowest at 13%. Photography is particularly high in the North West, Yorkshire and the East Midlands. Film/video is highest in the West Midlands, followed by the East Midlands and Yorkshire. Writing is highest in Yorkshire as is music.

Table 57 summarises, for each art or craft, the proportion of the total British population enjoy-

ing it, the proportion regularly taking part or practising it and the proportion actively learning it. Overall, nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents name arts or crafts that they particularly enjoy, appreciably more women (78%) than men (68%). Over half (56%) of respondents regularly take part in or practise some arts or crafts, again more women (61%) than men (51%). However, the proportions engaged in actively learning are nearly level between men and women: 15% overall are actively learning, with slightly more women (16%) women than men (14%). The subjects showing the highest proportions for active learning are: performing music/playing an instrument, photography, writing, drawing and painting.

Table 57: Proportions who enjoy regularly, take part in and actively learn specific arts and crafts

Arts or crafts	Particularly enjoy	Regularly take part in	Actively learn
Base – all respondents = 100%	2,022	2,022	2,022
Film/video	26	11	1
Embroidery/sewing/ knitting	20	16	1
Photography	19	13	2
Writing	15	11	2
Performing music	13	9	3
Dance	13	7	1
Drawing	12	7	2
Wood-working	11	7	1
Painting	11	7	2
Singing	10	6	1
Dressmaking/tailoring	9	6	1
Drama	8	3	1
Textiles	4	2	1
Soft furnishings	4	2	*
Pottery/ceramics	4	2	1
Patchwork/quilting	3	2	*
Collage	3	1	*
Jewellery-making	3	1	*
Silver/metalwork	2	1	*
Sculpture	2	1	1
Other arts/crafts	5	4	2
All naming arts/crafts	73	56	15
None of these	27	44	85

Table 58 shows the same analysis for the three nations, England, Scotland and Wales separately. While the sample sizes are small, there are indications of different patterns of behaviour and interest between the nations which whet the appetite for more detailed research involving larger samples.

The current survey indicates generally a lower level of enjoyment in arts and crafts both in Wales and Scotland than is shown in England: three quarters (74%) of the English name arts and crafts enjoyed compared with two thirds of the Scottish (68%) and the Welsh (67%).

Table 58: Proportions who enjoy, regularly take part in and actively learn specific arts and crafts

Art or craft	Particularly enjoy			Regularly take part in			Actively learn		
	England	Wales	Scotland	England	Wales	Scotland	England	Wales	Scotland
Base – all respondents = 100%	1,737	103	183	1,737	103	183	1,737	103	183
Film/video	26	21	23	11	8	13	1	–	*
Embroidery/sewing/ knitting	21	23	18	17	16	13	2	1	1
Photography	21	9	13	14	4	10	2	1	–
Writing	15	11	14	11	4	11	2	3	2
Performing music	14	14	19	9	9	7	3	3	2
Dance	14	5	11	8	2	8	1	–	1
Drawing	12	12	8	7	8	6	2	1	2
Wood-working	12	8	8	7	5	4	2	1	–
Painting	11	14	5	7	10	3	2	4	1
Singing	10	9	6	6	9	5	1	–	1
Dress-making/tailoring	10	7	10	6	4	7	1	–	1
Drama	8	11	5	3	6	1	1	–	1
Textiles	4	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	1
Soft furnishings	4	1	3	3	–	1	*	–	–
Pottery/ceramics	4	4	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
Patchwork/quilting	3	–	3	2	–	2	*	–	1
Collage	3	2	1	1	–	*	1	–	–
Jewellery-making	3	1	4	1	–	2	*	–	*
Silver/metal work	2	3	2	1	2	1	*	1	–
Sculpture	2	2	1	1	2	1	*	–	1
Other arts/crafts	5	2	3	5	2	3	2	–	1
All naming arts/crafts	74	67	68	57	48	51	16	8	10
None of these	26	33	32	43	52	49	84	92	90

This difference is paralleled by a higher figure for regular participation and also for active learning. Of the English, 57% regularly participate and 16% actively learn. Of the Scottish, 51% regularly participate and 10% actively learn. Of the Welsh 48% regularly participate and 8% actively learn. While 1 in every 3 to 4 in England who particpates is actively learning, in Scotland the figure is 1 in 5 and in Wales only 1 in 6.

The lower levels of active participation and learning in some particular arts and crafts must reflect the limitations of resources and provision. For example, in working with silver and other precious metals, the cost of materials and availability of workshop facilities is a barrier for some learners, and inhibits amateurs. There are also high cost factors associated with work in heavy metals, in pottery and ceramics, and in sculpture, especially when the need for large workshop and studio space with expensive equipment is taken into account. In textiles, for example, there are teaching environments which can accommodate the larger scale equipment needed for weaving and knitting, with fewer institutions able to offer related textile design facilities. In some art and craft forms there is also a shortage of trained teachers.

Progression in learning arts and crafts

Enjoyment is, of course, a long way away from serious practice and learning. It does, however, provide a frame against which to interpret more specific activity. It is clear that different art and craft forms prompt different types of more active or passive responses, sometimes leading to personal activity, sometimes to less 'active' enjoyment and Table 59 attempts to depict this by relating the proportion of people who are actively learning or practising, the proportion of people who are studying for a qualification and the proportion who plan to take activities up in the future to the overall figure who say that they particularly enjoy each activity.

The proportions enjoying different subjects do not relate tidily to the proportions of the 'enjoyers' who are also regularly active. Looking at the subjects with a high proportion of 'enjoyers' and with a high proportion who are regularly active or who plan to take subjects up in the future produces quite a different perspective. Table 60 summarises the subjects which have over 10% of their 'enjoyers' regularly active. The majority of the more unusual subjects also show high proportions of their 'enjoyers' planning to take these subjects up in the future. The exceptions are interesting: performing or playing music, singing, drawing and collage. The implication offered is that these are already easily accessible activities.

This quite practical set of questions conceals a complex array of provision, interest and needs. Some people are fortunate enough to have their eyes and imagination opened to the arts when young, at school or at home, but many others come to the arts later on in life. While some people are attracted to making a career as an arts practitioner and require training to achieve this, many others will appreciate a variety of art forms as observers and often have their imagination and creativity thus enhanced. But the arts present the same challenge that education in all its forms

Table 59 Proportions regularly active, studying for a qualification and planning to take each activity up in the future

Arts and crafts	% of total population enjoying art/craft	Base: number who enjoy named art/craft =100%	% regularly active	% studying for qualification	% plan to take up in the future
Film/video	26	519	4.4	1.2	0.4
Embroidery/sewing/ knitting	20	413	7.3	.05	0.5
Photography	19	394	9.4	.02	12.7
Writing	15	301	13.6	3.7	13.6
Performing music/playing instrument	13	268	23.1	5.2	13.1
Dance	13	269	9.7	3.3	7.8
Drawing	12	243	17.2	4.1	9.5
Wood-working	11	228	12.3	3.5	12.2
Painting	11	215	19.5	6.0	21.4
Singing	10	196	13.3	2.0	4.1
Dressmaking/tailoring	9	191	7.9	3.1	9.4
Drama	8	166	9.6	2.4	11.4
Textile art/crafts	4	84	27.4	8.3	21.4
Soft furnishings	4	78	3.8	1.3	33.3
Pottery/ceramics	4	75	20.0	12.0	36.0
Patchwork/quilting	3	62	9.7	1.6	19.4
Collage	3	53	18.9	7.5	5.7
Jewellery-making	3	52	17.3	7.7	25.0
Silver/metalwork	2	45	15.6	6.7	17.8
Sculpture	2	39	28.2	12.8	17.9
Other arts/crafts	5	103	32.0	14.6	28.1

NB Percentages in first column are ranked vertically and columns 2-5 relate horizontally

does: those who have had access to it, know what they are interested in and how to find it and more of them come from already better educated and higher social classes.

At minimum, our cultural and arts heritage should be easily accessible to all and not only those with more education and enough money. Preferably, as with the new Arts Lottery programme, there should be a positive attempt to reach people without previous access. This issue underlies many people's concern over the Lottery, where the evidence is clear that people from lower social class backgrounds are buying lottery tickets at proportionately higher rates and are

Table 60: Arts or crafts enjoyed related to high level of regular activity

	% of enjoyers who are regularly active	% of enjoyers who plan to take subject up
Sculpture	28.2	17.9
Textile arts/crafts	27.4	21.4
Performing music/playing instruments	23.1	13.1
Pottery/ceramics	20.0	36.0
Painting	19.5	21.4
Collage	18.9	5.7
Jewellery-making	17.3	25.0
Drawing	17.2	9.5
Silver/metal-work	15.6	17.8
Writing	13.6	13.6
Singing	13.3	4.1
Wood-working	12.3	12.2

proportionately lower users of arts and cultural facilities. In particular, many older people have had little access to the arts in their younger life, when vocational imperatives have been most important. Chapter 10 looked at subjects people would like to learn about and there is a substantial group of older people who name arts and crafts. Such opportunities for active or passive participation are also extremely important, especially as people have more leisure, or are unemployed or (have to) take early retirement.

On the more practical side, there have always been examples of people starting, for instance, with an interest in flower-arranging (the classic example), who go on to train in floristry and set up a shop. Pottery, textile arts, painting, writing, photography are all examples of areas where an interest in the arts develops into employment, often self-employment or a small business.

The arts are part of our inheritance. They enrich our society and all our lives. They form a bridge between generations and cultures. There are particular challenges in offering arts provision in an increasingly multi-cultural society: to offer a variety of provision and of accessible milieux. The rewards for success will last for future generations.

Northern Ireland – perspectives

JOHN FIELD

This is the first time that Northern Ireland has been included within the NIACE surveys of participation. The results show a number of variations from the pattern in other UK regions. In particular, the survey confirms earlier studies which have shown that fewer people take part in adult learning in Northern Ireland than is the case in Britain (Field and Schuller, 1996). It also shows that fewer people in Northern Ireland plan to study at some time in the future. These are extremely significant findings, and will need to be tackled in any attempt to develop adult learning in Northern Ireland. Within Northern Ireland, it seems that patterns of participation follow the same broad tendencies as in Britain. However, the survey also showed a number of variations from the patterns of participation, future intentions and opinions that were found in Britain.

Because of its relatively small population, Gallup was asked to interview a booster sample in Northern Ireland. These interviews were carried out for the Gallup Organisation by Ulster Marketing Surveys Ltd. The sample was stratified by region and town size, and over 50 separate sampling points were covered. Exactly the same questions were asked as in Britain, and interviewing was conducted under the same rubric. The data for Northern Ireland are therefore relatively robust; and they are generally comparable with those for the British regions.

Data for Northern Ireland in this chapter come from the enhanced sample of 528 people. Weighting the sample back to its correct proportion in relation to the other three nations in the UK brings it to a weighted sample of 122, the figures used in the main report. This means that there may be slight differences between the figures used in the main text of this report and those reported in this chapter. Even with a sample of 528 interviews, while it is possible to make overall comparisons between Northern Ireland and the other parts of the UK, it is not always possible to go into detail within the Northern Ireland sample. This chapter therefore outlines some of the main comparisons between Northern Ireland and Britain. Since this is the first such Northern Ireland survey, rather than lose the additional information about 16 year-olds, it has been decided to make comparisons between the full sample of all respondents aged 16 and over.

Current and future participation

Table 61: Current and recent participation in Northern Ireland and the UK

	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
Base – all respondents aged 16 and over = 100%	528	4,755
Current learning	19	25
Recent learning	12	17
Past learning	17	23
None since leaving full-time education	52	36

Adults in Northern Ireland are less likely to participate in learning than are their counterparts in any UK region. In particular, adults in Northern Ireland are much more likely to say that they have not studied or learned since they left full-time education. In the absence of a systematic picture of provision for adults, it is impossible to say whether the main cause of this distinctive pattern lies with the lack of poor quality opportunities available in Northern Ireland. And in the absence of previous surveys of adult learning in the six counties, it is impossible to say whether the position in 1996 has changed in any way over time.

What is abundantly clear is the relative weakness of adult education and training as compared with Britain. This highly distinctive pattern also applies to the different sub-categories of the general population. The broad pattern of lower participation holds true for both men and women: among women, for example, only 16% said they were currently learning in Northern Ireland, as against 22% in Britain; among men the figures were 21% and 26% respectively. If we take social class, then it is perhaps surprising to note that even the ABC1s take part less frequently: 25% reported that they are currently doing some learning, as against 33% in Britain. In fact, this finding is remarkably consistent. It contrasts strongly with the typical pattern among school leavers, where Northern Ireland performs well above the UK average both in terms of the number and level of qualifications gained and the proportion of young people who go on to higher education.

Future intentions were also distinctive. Some 32% say they are likely to take up learning within the next three years (39% in Britain); 62% say they are unlikely to do so (54% in Britain). Although men are slightly more likely to say they are 'very' rather than 'fairly' unlikely to study in the future, Northern Ireland's response is broadly similar for both men and women. Intentions to study in the future are highest among the younger age groups, falling to 7% among those aged 55 and over; they are higher among those working than those not working; and markedly higher among members of the higher socio-economic groups.

Patterns of study

Although the broad pattern of subjects being studied currently or recently are similar, there are also some variations. Computer studies, which comes first in both countries, attracts 14% of all learners in Northern Ireland and 17% in the UK. Among women, 10% are studying computing in Northern Ireland and 15% in the UK – a larger gap than among men. Business and management is the second most popular subject in both Northern Ireland and in the UK as a whole. Similarly, nursing is strongly represented; in Northern Ireland, almost all those who are studying nursing, first aid or health studies are women. The humanities tend to be more popular in Northern Ireland, where English language and literature is third best represented; foreign language study on the other hand is less well represented. Crafts also tend to represent a larger proportion of current or recent learning in Northern Ireland: carpentry, car maintenance, dressmaking, gardening, painting/pottery/sculpture, and above all cookery/catering take a somewhat larger share than in Britain; only engineering and general handicrafts are lower. Sports subjects are also well represented.

The location of study is also different. Less frequently cited than in Britain are higher education institutions (16% as against 21% in Britain), one's own workplace (8% against 14%), and evening institutes (adult education in Northern Ireland is not provided through separate adult education centres). Intriguingly, a larger proportion in Northern Ireland said that they study at home informally.

More people have to travel to study in Northern Ireland, as fewer people are studying at work. 19% of Northern Ireland learners do not have to travel at all, compared with 25% in Britain who say they study either at home or at work. Those who do travel in Northern Ireland include 17% who face a journey of over 10 miles. This reflects the social geography of the six counties: outside Belfast, most people live in small and often remote settlements, so that physical access is often a major constraint on choice and sometimes a decisive barrier.

Particularly among men, adult learners in Northern Ireland tend to have followed a longer course or pursued a subject of long-standing interest: 51% in Northern Ireland said they have studied their main subject for over two years (compared with 35% in Britain); by contrast only 16% have followed their interest for six months or less (against 32% in Britain). This is in part due to the smaller proportion of learning at work, where as the main report shows, there are more shorter learning episodes recorded at work. Northern Ireland learners tended to report that they spend slightly more time on their subject than was the case in Britain.

Information and advice

Adult learners in Northern Ireland tend to rely heavily on personal contact for information. Asked where they had learned about the main subject they have studied recently, some 22% say it

was from friends, relatives or workmates, compared with 15% in Britain; only in northern England, at 18%, did the use of personal contact approach the Northern Ireland level. Another 21% (25% among men) say their main source was school, as against only 12% in Britain (though 22% used this source in East Anglia). By contrast, while 22% in Britain mentioned their workplace, employer or training officer as their main source, this compares with only 15% in Northern Ireland (still higher than Wales with 11%). Further education institutions are more important in Northern Ireland than elsewhere. Sources used less often in Northern Ireland are newspaper advertisements, universities and other higher education institutions and libraries.

Fewer people believe that there is not enough help and advice available about learning opportunities: 44% agree with this statement (47% in Britain) and 41% disagree (33% in Britain). Among Northern Ireland respondents, 13% disagree strongly with the statement; one possible explanation is that this reflects the standing of the Educational Guidance Service for Adults and other agencies dedicated to information and guidance in Northern Ireland. However, given that there is a lower level of interest in adult learning, it may be that people in Northern Ireland are more easily satisfied than are adults elsewhere.

Motivation and qualifications

Asked their main reasons for starting recent learning, people in Northern Ireland are more likely to say that it was because they are interested in the subject (24% against 19%), to get a job (19% against 16%), get onto a future course (6% against 2%), or develop themselves as a person (11% against 8%). They are less likely to have started in order to change the type of work they did (3% against 6%), to make work more satisfying (3% against 5%), to help in their current job (10% against 12%), or simply to go along with an employer's choice (1% against 3%).

Learners in Northern Ireland were more likely to be working towards lower and less likely to be aiming at higher academic qualifications. Some 9% of Northern Ireland learners were aiming at GCSEs (3% in Britain) and 7% at A Levels (6% in Britain); however, only 16% were aiming at a degree or Dip. H.E. (19% in Britain). So far as lower and intermediate levels of vocational qualifications are concerned, the broad pattern is similar; rather fewer are aiming at a City and Guilds qualification in Northern Ireland (2% against 4%) and rather more for a NVQ level 3 (4% against 2%). Overall, the broad similarity in vocational qualifications at these levels represents similar government training policies towards the vocational qualifications framework, particularly since they are being take more frequently among those who are not working than among those at work. The category of 'other professional qualification' is the exception; this category was mentioned more frequently in Britain (13% against 9% in Northern Ireland), and in both cases is overwhelmingly being taken by those who are in work. Finally, 37% in Northern Ireland (32% among women and 43% among men; 82% among the over 55s) were not aiming at any qualifications, compared with 34% in Britain.

The survey data are broadly consistent with other evidence that qualifications rates are lower among the adult population in Northern Ireland, but not consistent with Labour Force Survey and census data on the British population. So far as Northern Ireland is concerned, they show that the highest level of qualification among adults is more likely to be apprenticeship (9% against 3% in Britain), RSA certificates (6% against 3%) or GCSE/CSE/O Levels (29% against 21%). Northern Ireland adults are less likely to have A Levels (6% against 9%), a degree (6% against 8%), or an ONC/OND/BTEC national (less than 0.5% against 2%).

Non-participation

The high rate of non-participation deserves closer attention. Part of the explanation may simply be that many of today's adults had limited schooling in the past. Certainly, the average terminal age of education in Northern Ireland is lower than in Britain. In total, 62% say that they were 16 or under when they finished full-time education, as compared with 59% in Britain. Those aged 20 or over (excluding current students) account for 9% in Northern Ireland and 16% in Britain. As noted above, a much larger proportion of young people continue into higher education than in Britain; traditionally, though, the best-qualified tend to emigrate if they cannot find work locally.

However, this can only be a partial explanation, since participation in Northern Ireland is lower across the board. Some 8% of people who had left education at under 16 said they were currently learning in Northern Ireland, compared with 10% in the UK overall; among those who had left at 16-17, 8% were currently learning in Northern Ireland, compared with 20% across the UK. We therefore need to look more widely for the explanation than simply to the past educational experiences of today's adults.

As noted already, the proportion who learn at work is just over half the average for Britain. The reasons for this have largely to do with the structure of Northern Ireland's labour market. One obvious factor is that workplace learning is only possible if you have a job: long-term unemployment in Northern Ireland is well above the UK average, and labour force activity rates for women are comparatively low, so that many people simply do not have access to learning in the workplace. Northern Ireland's economy also has above-average levels of employment in small firms, where training levels tend to be relatively low; family-owned businesses are particularly strong. These factors have helped create a labour market where employees are typically selected by informal means; education-based criteria, especially qualifications, are relatively unimportant.

Certainly, reasons for not studying do show variations. Those not currently learning are far more likely to claim lack of interest in Northern Ireland (40%) than Britain (28%). Other factors that appear stronger barriers in Northern Ireland are child care arrangements (13% against 9% – and 23% against 16% among women); work and other time pressures (18% against 16%); inability to get time off work (5% against 3%); and not having got round to it (10% against 8%).

Barriers cited less frequently in Northern Ireland included cost factors (7% against 10%) and a sense of being too old / ill / disabled (13% against 15%).

Attitudes towards adult learning

General attitudes towards adult learning are remarkably positive in Northern Ireland. Asked to consider the statement, 'Learning is something people do throughout their life', 96% agree (94% in Britain), with 35% (27% in Britain) expressing strong agreement. This is reflected by personal confidence in learning new skills: 72% say that they are confident about learning new skills (against 75% in Britain). Slightly more people in Northern Ireland believe that training makes one's job more interesting (77% against 72%) and that training at work leads to better promotion or pay (74% against 70%). When faced with the statement that 'People should not be expected to learn new skills for their career in their own time', Northern Ireland respondents tend to be more polarised in their views: while 38% agree (against 31% in Britain) and 44% disagree (53% in Britain), there are more in Northern Ireland who either agree or disagree strongly. A similar pattern characterised responses to the related statement, 'I don't see why I should pay for learning that is to do with my job or career': 48% agreed (44% in Britain) and 32% disagreed (36% in Britain), but with greater numbers in Northern Ireland expressing such views strongly. Essentially, it seems that there is greater willingness to fund one's own learning in the UK as a whole, and a stronger expectation in Northern Ireland that it will be paid for by someone else.

With this in mind, it is hardly surprising if positive attitudes do not always translate into practical plans for the future. People in Northern Ireland are noticeably less likely to have definite plans, and more likely to say that they had no plans for future learning. When asked about the probability that they would take up any learning in the next three years, only 17% in Northern Ireland describe themselves as 'very likely' (21% in the UK as a whole) and 52% say they are 'very unlikely' to do so (45% in the UK as a whole). Interestingly, the responses to this question for Northern Ireland vary very little from those from Wales and Scotland.

Among those who do have plans to learn, the subject spread is generally similar. Computing features most strongly among future intentions in Northern Ireland and in Britain, with 11% saying that they would be interested in learning more about it if they could. However, whereas 11% in Britain declared a similar level of interest in foreign languages, only 6% do so in Northern Ireland; business administration / management and handicrafts shared third place at 5% each. Responses otherwise are very similar, and scattered across an equally wide range of subjects.

Conclusions

These findings demonstrate abundant scope for improving levels of participation in lifetime learning in Northern Ireland. Government has in recent years indicated that it wishes to see

increasing levels of lifelong learning. As yet, though, its own figures suggest that Northern Ireland is some way from meeting the National Targets for Education and Training. More starkly, the House of Commons Committee on Northern Ireland Affairs spoke in 1995 of a 'low skills base in the workforce and the misapplication of much talent' as a significant cause of economic weakness (Northern Ireland Affairs Committee 1995, xvi). Yet in general, policy-makers have been loath to admit that any problem exists. Northern Ireland's absence from previous national surveys is a symptom of this reluctance to accept that, in the field of adult learning at least, the region faces a troubling and persistent problem. Perhaps the present survey is a positive sign of change among policy-makers.

If the first challenge is for policy-makers to acknowledge the existence of a serious problem, the second must be to tackle it. This may be complicated, since many of the causes of low participation in the region are not just to do with volume and quality of provision (ie, the supply side). Demand-side factors include the following:

- differential emigration – that is, emigration levels are higher among those who have the best qualifications, and lower among those whose school experiences were least rewarding;
- employment patterns – agriculture and very small firms, both of which tend to invest relatively little in training, account for a large part of Northern Ireland's workforce;
- the labour market – Northern Ireland has a strong informal labour market, and employers often base their recruitment and selection decisions on personal knowledge (including family contacts) rather than formal qualifications;
- poverty and social exclusion – by western European standards, Northern Ireland is comparatively a poor region with a history of violent internal conflict, raising powerful practical barriers to participation in formal adult learning.

Policy-makers have so far expressed no desire to influence these demand-side factors directly. In the absence of a single-minded and interventionist strategy driven by politicians, the alternative probably lies in sustained and focused partnerships between providers, local authorities, the business interest and communities themselves.

Supply-side factors are probably more open to politically-led change. Those which have helped to create the present difficulty include:

- distance – Northern Ireland's dispersed population means that many adults simply cannot find an appropriate programme within reasonable travelling distance;
- demography – with a relatively young population by western European standards,

Northern Ireland's further education sector has faced few of the pressures which led institutions in Britain to open themselves to an adult constituency;

- quality and progression – for political reasons, government (including the European Commission) has placed contracts with a wide range of private, voluntary and community-based agencies to provide education and training for adults, and the quality, range and credibility of programmes in this sector varies;

- learning to learn – Northern Ireland's school system is doubly selective (it is divided along ethnic-religious lines, with a grammar/secondary system at 11 plus), with a strong and arguably very narrow academic focus, and many specialists believe that it has not done enough to encourage a love of learning for its own sake.

Clearly, the supply-side problems are at least as urgent as those on the demand side, and they may be rather easier to tackle.

Recent developments, on balance, provide grounds for some optimism. As elsewhere in the UK, funding changes in further and adult education can narrow the range of local opportunities. Although the Department of Education has stated that 'promotion of a culture of lifetime learning should be an important dimension of the sector' (DENI 1996, 20), this ambition has not been accompanied by positive steps to protect adult programmes from the steady haemorrhage which followed incorporation in Britain. On the other hand, Open College accreditation, especially among voluntary and community-based providers, is designed to improve progression and encourage greater quality. Furthermore, a credit accumulation and transfer framework is being developed with support from the Department of Education, which wants the new framework fully in place by 2000. A number of policy initiatives including the EU's Special Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland, as well as the UK government's support for cross-departmental initiatives such as Making Belfast Work, place great stress upon the value of inter-agency partnerships. The Training and Employment Agency's Jobskills programme provides ambitious targets for the long-term unemployed to gain qualifications, and benefit from independent guidance and advice. The Northern Ireland CBI's Growth Challenge initiative is an expression of the business community's wish to adapt to the challenges of the knowledge-based society. Northern Ireland's two universities are rapidly developing a capacity to support learners in remote and rural communities through the new communication technologies. These are still only encouraging signs, however. More ambitious and decisive steps are required if Northern Ireland is to achieve similar participation levels to those found in Britain, let alone to become a learning society in its own right.

Wales – perspectives

Hywel Francis

The Headline Findings of this survey by Alan Tuckett and Naomi Sargant (NIACE, 1996) have already identified a major trend, namely 'the UK is increasingly two nations – one convinced of the value of learning – participating regularly and planning to do more – the other so far choosing not to join the learning society'. The full findings of the survey now released reveal that such a divide is very much a function of social class, gender, employment, initial education and location.

This divide appears to become all the more evident in the communities on the economic and geographic margins of the UK, such as Wales. A recent in-depth local study of young people not in education, training and employment – described as 'Status Zero' – reveals that the situation in certain parts of Wales (the Valleys) is even more depressing. Similar studies in the rural and inner-city areas of Wales would undoubtedly identify similar patterns.

Three cautionary 'health warning' observations need to be made however about this valuable Survey. Firstly, as already indicated, there are considerable social, economic and demographic differences across Wales which are increasing rather than diminishing. In recent times these differences appear to be accelerating as a result of the M4 corridor and inward investment in South East Wales. Any Welsh findings and any conclusions drawn should therefore be aware of this. Secondly, whilst it is welcome to have the acknowledgement of four nations within the UK there is an anglocentric flaw in the approach to Wales in that there is no acknowledgement of any essentially 'Welsh' factors, especially in relation to the Welsh language. It would be appropriate therefore that when a future survey is commissioned that some recognition be made of these two key issues. Thirdly, the Welsh sample is small relative to the other nations, and was not boosted as it had been in the 1994 MORI survey.

A different context? Competitiveness, partnership and social exclusion in Wales

Even before the 'Status Zero' study was published there was growing concern that a two-nation culture within Wales was already well-established and we were possibly beginning to lose the battle for lifelong learning. The Welsh Office's *People and Prosperity: An Agenda for Action* in Wales identified lifelong learning as one of the answers to the problem of a potentially growing skills deficit and the critical link between economic prosperity and the creation of a learning society:

> To adapt in a rapidly changing world, adults increasingly need to keep their skills up-to-date or learn new ones. Those who missed out at school need education and training if they are to get on. Women may need to learn new skills if they are to return to work but are having children. Unemployed people may need to add to their skills in order to get jobs. Individuals generally need help and encouragement to take responsibility for their learning and develop their careers. (p. 18)

However, that document focused too sharply on NVQs and providing opportunities for those in work. Insufficient attention was given to learner support and integrated pathways of learning involving linkages between non-accredited and accredited adult provision, particularly for the increasing numbers who could be described as socially excluded. Such an important theme was already highlighted by the 1993 Delors White Paper *Growth, Competitiveness and Employment* which connected lifelong learning to the question of combating social exclusion.

That policy debate around a broader, more balanced socio-economic purpose of lifelong learning was comprehensively taken forward by the NIACE Cymru Policy Discussion Paper by David Istance and Gareth Rees entitled *A Programme for Prosperity: Lifelong Learning in Wales* (1995). This Paper also emphasised that the necessary arrangements supportive of lifelong learning needed 'to reflect the specificities of their times and locations', recognising the learning inheritance and the contemporary problems within Wales.

As a constructive comment on the inherited Welsh model, *Lifelong Learning in Wales* has provided an invaluable critique and a new alternative model which emphasises an increase in opportunities, rigorous quality criteria, improved pathways of progression, accessibility, flexibility and organisational frameworks which will enable diversity and compatibility through partnership and collaboration.

The Welsh model for lifelong learning currently in place, however, also suffers from an inability to address the imposition of an internal education market at a time when the skills deficit and social exclusion are crying out for more European-style social partnerships. The findings of The Learning Divide only serve therefore to underline what was already feared and prefigured by the policy documents which had emerged in Wales in the 1990s.

The findings in Wales

In general, the findings for Wales make uncomfortable and somewhat depressing reading but there are also some areas of encouragement and hope. Wales performs below the national UK average in all but one of the designated categories of participation in learning. The differences are unacceptably divergent from England and Scotland (as well as many English regions), and parallel other earlier findings relating to national training and educational targets. Moreover, the Welsh appear to be less likely to be planning to take up learning opportunities in the next three years, 30% compared with 38% in the UK overall. On the whole, Wales performs poorly in

participation and intentions which probably means that it is losing the battle against 'social exclusion'.

It has already been noted that Wales is a bilingual society. The findings in relation to **subjects of learning** acknowledged the importance of English as a second language (ESOL) but this of course is in the context of ethnic minority participation. The special circumstances in Wales, of Welsh as a first or second language, Welsh learner provision and the incidence of Welsh-medium provision are all special factors which vary enormously from region to region within Wales. The very high return of learning a 'foreign' language in Wales (25% higher than anywhere else) may unfortunately be explained by Welsh being identified as 'foreign' by interviewers. Closer scrutiny of the questionnaires does not show Welsh written into 'other answers' except in one case.

Information about **learning opportunities** reveals a startlingly high incidence in Wales of information being provided by school and further or higher education of all sorts, which may indicate the pro-active and integrated role of such institutions in the wider community. Further and higher education institutions also provide the location of learning for very high proportions of learners: at 58% this is significantly higher than any other nation or region. Far fewer respondents have found out about their learning from work, and fewer Welsh respondents give work as their location of learning. There appears to be a clear link between the low level of workplace learning, lack of employment opportunities and motivation for learning in Wales. Equally revealing was the very low return for informal home-based learning, the lowest in the UK.

Motivation for learning reveals that Welsh respondents are twice as likely as the UK national average to return to study in order to gain employment, yet conversely there is a feeling that training in order to help in a current job is seen to be less important than in any other nation or region in the UK, mirroring the poorer employment prospects. Fewer learners in Wales have no fees to pay, and fewer learners are funded by employers, only 11% compared with 20% in the UK as a whole. More learners in Wales are receiving local authority or other government grants, 28% in Wales compared with 19% in the UK. Barriers to learning are similar to those experienced elsewhere, though there are more people who show lack of motivation, are not interested or feel they are too old to learn than in other nations. This will also relate to lack of qualifications, also a factor in Welsh participation, with 33% (the highest proportion in the UK) having no educational qualifications.

The Welsh responses to the **purpose and funding of training** are significantly different from every other part of the UK. The Welsh believe that training makes jobs more interesting, results in better pay and promotion and that it should be undertaken in work-time. Furthermore, the Welsh are more likely to value help and advice, lifelong learning, public funding for learning and confidence in learning new skills: in each of these categories Welsh respondents scored significantly higher than any other nation or region in the UK. This is perhaps the most revealing finding in the whole survey: that despite lack of opportunities, an awareness and appreciation of lifelong learning is remarkably high.

General conclusions

It has already been observed that the Welsh findings are sufficiently divergent to be both alarming and encouraging and that differences within Wales not revealed by the survey would probably indicate even greater problems and aspirations. More specifically, the conclusion must be drawn that provision, circumstances (personal and collective), lack of opportunity and probably lack of planning are all key factors.

There is no doubt that central government funding mechanisms (despite some marginal tinkering of the system in Wales based on postcode enrolments in the FE sector) have driven providers into individualistic and competitive modes of delivery rather than traditional regional planning systems. Cuts in local authority provision and discretionary grants have also undoubtedly had their impact.

Paradoxically whilst provision and participation in Wales seem to reveal serious problems, expectations and understanding of lifelong learning seem relatively high compared with the rest of the UK. This may be a combination of a 'learning inheritance' and a rapidly changing society creating a contemporary 'learning outlook'.

A future Survey, if it recognises the regional, demographic and linguistic diversity across Wales (including also of course the needs of minority ethnic groups), is likely to reveal patterns of social exclusion comparable with any disadvantaged region in the whole of Europe. What is heartening is that understanding and expectation is still unexpectedly high: this Survey sends out a signal that this precarious learning inheritance may be dissipated if dreams do not become reality.

Identifying problems: economic, social and cultural

Understandably much public, media and Government attention is currently being focused on enhancing skills levels as a result of the need to respond to successful inward investment strategies, particularly in South East Wales. This is complicated by a fear that the inward investment would be followed by a rapid inflow of highly skilled labour 'from across the Severn Bridge', displacing the newly-emerging skilled local workforce.

But a series of revealing micro-studies on social exclusion, including some important action research, is beginning to identify a potentially more alarming trend: that generations of socially-excluded young and middle-aged adults are increasingly becoming alienated from the whole of society and thus potentially de-stabilising it at a local and regional level. The question therefore starkly arises of how lifelong learning strategies can assist in the process of social cohesion. At its most brutal, this can most manifest itself not only in terms of a rising trend in drug abuse amongst young people, but also increasing numbers of racial attacks and xenophobia: most recently *The Western Mail* (20 January 1997) reported 'Fascist Poster War in Wales Condemned'.

Other, less dramatic crises, but nonetheless critical for certain rural, valley and urban communities, reveal a growing number of socially excluded groups. Adam Price of Menter a Busnes at a recent Day School proposed that there was a need for a 're-valorising of learning, creativity and caring' through State and private sector interventions and through emphasising the sense of local and regional identity. By such more holistic strategies, excluded groups of all generations would be able to re-connect with society. The over-emphasis on the narrow education / training – work continuum would then be corrected.

In this context the importance of lifelong learning to lifelong living needs to address such fundamental questions as health and housing, or in the case of many, ill-health and homelessness. Too often in Wales, as elsewhere, there is a direct correlation between areas of economic deprivation, ill-health and homelessness, as in the valleys and inner-city areas. A recent Swansea survey has revealed that

> A significant number of people in Swansea are both homeless and unemployed. 1/3 of the total number of registered unemployed Swansea residents are aged between 18 and 25, and in 1995, 700 homeless young people, aged between 16 and 25, were known to Local Authority Departments.

It is encouraging that the Swansea Foyer Project, launched in 1996 to assist homeless young people, has emphasised the importance of lifelong learning as a key element to assist in breaking the 'no home, no job' cycle.

Resources of hope in Wales

As with other so-called peripheral areas of the UK, there are nevertheless some resources of hope and signs of optimism often to be found in 'marginal' situations. The work of Community Enterprise Wales in rural, urban and valley areas is a model of grass roots and social partnership responding to socio-economic decline and very much rooted in contemporary reality, yet inheriting the strong co-operative and learning traditions in Wales. The best example of this approach is the workers' buyout at Tower Colliery; the new company / co-operative places great emphasis on education and training with a range of providers being involved from the WEA, local Colleges and local Universities. Similarly, that spirit of partnership is much in evidence, assisted by the European Social Fund, through the very localised initiatives which nevertheless network across Europe, such as the DOVE Women's Workshop and the Community University of the Valleys. The latter now embraces three Universities and several local community groups. Much of this networking has been fostered on a regional basis for over a decade through open college networks and by such bodies as the Valleys' Initiative for Adult Education; both initiatives are rooted in the culture of community development. As a consequence the now well-established linkage in Wales between adult education and community development prefigured the European linkage between lifelong learning and combating social exclusion.

As Jimmy Jamar of the European Commission stated in calling for a new manifesto at the

NIACE Cymru Lifelong Learning Conference in November 1996, 'there is a present need to help Welsh citizens in identifying new learning opportunities through their life cycle and present Wales itself as a model of a learning region'. The problems and challenges are revealed The Learning Divide: the solutions can be achieved through a balanced socio-economic approach to lifelong learning based on skills enhancement, social partnership and active citizenship.

Scotland – perspectives

TOM SCHULLER

Introduction and background

The Gallup survey evidence is very helpful to those of us attempting to get a grip on where Scotland stands in relation to lifelong learning, and in setting targets which are realistic, stretching and sufficiently broad. The repetition of the 1990 survey provides valuable longitudinal data; in essence it establishes a set of benchmarks for future work on the monitoring of progress towards (or regression from) a learning society.

This is all the more timely as we are possibly on the threshold of a significant change in Scotland's constitutional arrangements. If a Scottish Parliament is established in the next two to three years, education will certainly figure prominently in the policy issues which it will debate. It is, incidentally, by no means settled how far a Scottish Parliament – even if one is established – will seek to intervene in educational affairs, nor how much the intervention will be acceptable to local authorities on the one hand and the autonomous higher and further institutions on the other. This issue will have major implications for policies and practice in relation to adult participation in education and training. Moreover, the articulation with training policy will also have to be explored more fully. But one can say now that any policy will need repeated studies of this kind as a basis.

Munn and MacDonald's 1988 study is the *locus classicus* on adult participation in Scotland. However, its measure of participation was whether or not an adult had returned to education at any point in his or her life since full time education, which accounts for the impressively high rate of 42%. Since then, broad empirical research has been scarce. But a document published last year by the Scottish Community Education Council, *Scotland as a Learning Society*, identified a number of targets. These included an annual increase of at least 3% in the numbers of all adults participating in education in each of the next 5 years. And the John Wheatley Centre, a prominent Scottish think tank, has set up a number of policy commissions under the broad heading of the Governance of Scotland; one of these is on Education and Training, and will contain targets for the next decade, with proposals for monitoring progress.

It is worth reminding readers that different National Education and Training targets have been set in Scotland which reflect the higher initial education achievements. Thus by the year 2000 the target in England and Wales is for 60% to have achieved two A Levels or NVQ Level 3 by age

21, whereas in Scotland the equivalent target is for 70%. Less directly relevant to the statistical sources we are dealing with here, but nonetheless significant, is the greater breadth of the Scottish targets, which include references to creativity and citizenship on top of the more entrepreneurial competences.

Finally, we are currently at work on an ESRC-funded study which seeks to explain the apparent divergence between Scotland's high levels of initial educational achievement, relative to the rest of the UK, and her subsequent lower levels of participation in post-compulsory education and training. This study runs in parallel with one in Northern Ireland (cf John Field's contribution here). It should be said that the results of the 1996 survey show a marked increase in participation in Scotland, which makes the divergence look less significant.

The 1996 survey

Indeed, the most significant single result, for Scotland, is the apparent substantial increase in adults currently or recently participating. Between 1990 and 1996, this rose from 22% to 38%, a rise of no less than 72%. This is the fastest growth rate of any region, and contrasts dramatically with the UK average rise of just 1%. It brings Scotland from a very lowly position to one which is close to the UK average of 40%. There are no immediate explanations of such a sharp rise to hand, and it is possible that the sample sizes in one or other case – presumably the earlier – were less than adequate.

The second observation is less cheering for Scottish eyes. Having apparently caught up to near the UK average, Scotland slides right down the table when it comes to those who are unlikely or very unlikely to learn in the future. 61% put themselves in that position, compared with a UK average of 55%; only Northern Ireland fares worse, with 64%.

It may be that Scots are simply more honest and direct in their replies, having less fear of appearing to ignore the rhetoric of lifelong learning, but there is no reason to believe that this is the case. More plausible are the arguments that non-formal learning takes place which makes organised learning less of a priority; or, rather differently, that cultural attitudes have a depressive effect on aspirations, at least in some social sectors. It is this type of issue which we shall be exploring.

Although Scotland now has an occupational structure very similar to the picture for Britain as a whole (Scottish Enterprise, 1996), this latest NIACE survey shows that Scots fare better when it comes to receiving financial support for education and training from their employers (19% against a UK figure of 13%). And whilst the Scots appear from this latest data to be participating in workplace learning to the same extent as their counterparts elsewhere in the UK (15%), the figures from the Labour Force Survey (Winter, 1995/96) suggest that, comparatively speaking, Scotland has a lower propensity to train than might be expected from its labour market structures.

An ostensibly stereotypical picture of the canny Scot also emerges from the NIACE data, with 56% of respondents expressing a reluctance to fund their own training, compared with 44% in the UK overall. This may, however, indicate a more discriminating approach to deciding which opportunities are worth paying for; or may be a reflection (at least in part) of the different attitudes and priorities towards public service expenditure in Scotland.

One other surprise is that more Londoners than Scots seem to participate in open learning. Given the terrain and rural population of Scotland the opposite might have been expected. Staying power in relation to course completion as a whole is good, with Scotland 2% ahead of the UK figure of 35%.

The good news is that the Scots would appear to be more sociable than elsewhere, with marginally more Scots seeing new learning as a means to socialise and make new contacts. They also appear to be among the most confident in their ability to learn new skills, despite the gloomy prediction noted earlier as to their future aspirations. It may be that the practical stoicism and sense of predestination engendered by the Scots' historical legacy of the Calvinist work ethic (Harvie, 1994) makes Scots more likely to respond to events as they happen, rather than being proactive in the changes required of an educational system which has long been revered for its breadth, its vision and its differences in process, priorities and outcomes (Cowan, 1996).

Finally, we should add some data from the Family Expenditure Survey. It appears that Scottish people outspend the rest of the UK when it comes to education and training. The average weekly figure was £5.09 for 1994/95, compared with £3.92 for the UK as a whole. There are a number of possible reasons for this, for example a dispersed rural population which must spend more on travel in order to participate; but this cannot provide a full explanation. It will be issues of this kind which we shall be investigating in the ESRC research referred to earlier. Clearly, the issues are complex and open to multiple interpretations.

Comparison with earlier data is not a straightforward process, and we look forward to sharing information and ideas as to how the divergence between the rhetoric and the reality of lifelong learning here in Scotland may be better understood.

Continuing research issues

Each new survey on adult learning reveals more detail of the large map of adults' learning needs, habits and interests. At the same time each survey throws up new questions. In this survey, it was possible for the first time to cover the four nations of the UK. What this throws into sharp relief are the differences in participation in adult learning, which almost certainly stem from differences in opportunities and provision, not from people's intrinsic needs. These differences are too great to be acceptable within the United Kingdom. However, to look at these national differences in more detail will require surveys with larger samples.

Mirroring these national differences are differences between the regions of England, which again are unacceptable in terms of people's life opportunities. It is necessary to map existing provision and participation more effectively, and use such information to assist in regional and local planning more actively in the future. Local differences in provision have been exacerbated by the differing stations in which colleges and local authorities find themselves, particularly in relation to Schedule 2 provision. TECs are also carrying out their roles in different ways and with differing effects.

Behind this continues the debate about how best to ask questions and record answers about participation in adult learning. It is clear from the comparison of the SCPR and the NIACE surveys that the different questionnaire methodologies are recording different types of learning episodes: the SCPR survey has recorded a greater number of small workplace skills-based qualification-led episodes of training, while the NIACE surveys appears to record more longer qualification-led episodes of learning. There is obviously a more complex typology of learning to be worked out, but current attempts to do this are foundering on finding a language of description which both suits the need of the planners, providers and funders and is comprehensible to the learners and the general public. This problem is not made easy by the artificial distinction made between vocational, academic and general education. Ultimately it is learners who decide on their own motivation.

Most recently, it is suggested that the distinction should be between taught courses and other courses. However, the increase of open and flexible learning complicates this distinction, as does the increase in part-time study where many people are taught for a number of hours in a place separate from the place in which they do their private study. Informal learning is also of

increasing interest with the growth in the accreditation of prior learning.

There continue to be significant barriers to access which require positive actions, which hit some groups of learners and potential learners harder than others: in order that these groups do not continue to be excluded more work needs to be done on understanding and eliminating these barriers.

A new area of research which appears fruitful is to relate participation in adult learning to life developments. Answers to a question about the incidence of life events provide circumstantial evidence that some events have a closer relationship than others to participation in adult learning: 71% of those who are aiming for promotion are learning as are 45% of those who have had a marriage breakdown, compared with 40% of the group as a whole. These findings open up an interesting, speculative and more qualitative area for future research.

It is necessary to remember that resources for this survey did not enable specialist language interviewing or a booster sample of minority ethnic groups, and that this is also a priority for future research.

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Gallup Omnibus Survey on Lifelong Learning Technical Appendix

The sample design, fieldwork and analysis was carried out by the Gallup Organisation, who have provided the following description of the survey method.

The survey

The questions were included in a Gallup Omnibus survey. The questionnaire was incorporated for two weeks.

A national sample of 4,755 adults aged 16 and over living in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland was interviewed. The sampling was designed to be representative of all adults in the United Kingdom. An additional sample of adults living in Northern Ireland was interviewed bringing the number interviewed in Northern Ireland up to 528 adults.

Interviewing took place between 24 January and 6 February 1996 using fully trained and supervised Gallup Organisation interviewers.

Sampling method

The sample is representative of the adult population of the United Kingdom aged 16 and over. It was stratified by region and town size.

Interviewers were given quotas for sex by age, class and employment status of their respondents. Over 200 separate sampling points were covered.

At the tabulating stage the sample has been weighted where necessary to give the correct proportion by sex by class within region. The tables used in the report are based on the weighted sample – details of the weighted and unweighted sample are shown in Appendix V.

A booster sample of adults was interviewed in Northern Ireland by Ulster Marketing Surveys Ltd.

Notes on the tables

The survey was designed to permit 2 versions of the analysis: one to cover the labour market age group of 16-54 year-olds and one to cover the adult population of people aged 17 and over. The sample used is specified in each table, and details are given in Appendix V.

Figures in the tables are from the 1996 Gallup/NIACE survey unless otherwise indicated.

Tables are percentaged vertically unless otherwise specified.

All tables are based on weighted totals. Researchers who wish to pursue any particular topic can obtain the necessary basic figures from the set of full analyses at NIACE.

In tables, * indicates less than 0.5 per cent but greater than zero, and – indicates zero.

Percentages equal or greater than 0.5 have been rounded up in all tables (e.g. 0.5 per cent = one per cent, 36.5 per cent = 37 per cent).

Owing to the effects of rounding weighted data, the weighted bases shown in the tables may not always add to the expected base.

In a number of questions, respondents were invited to give more than one answer: and so percentages may well add to more than 100%.

Some sub-questions are filtered, that is, they are only asked of a proportion of respondents. Where questions are filtered, the base of the relevant group is indicated at the beginning of that table and percentages are derived from that base.

Regional analyses: inevitably, the number of sampling points in any one region is small – on average, one for every ten interviews. This fact should be taken into account when interpreting regional differences.

A guide to socio-economic class

Grade 'A' Households: the upper middle class

Informants from Grade 'A' households constitute about 3% of the total. The head of the household is a successful business or professional person, senior civil servant, or has considerable private means. A young person in some of these occupations who is not yet fully established may still be found in Grade 'B', though s/he eventually should reach Grade 'A'.

In country or suburban areas, 'A' grade households usually live in large detached houses or in expensive flats. In towns, they may live in expensive flats or town houses in the better parts of town.

Grade 'B' Households: the middle class

Grade 'B' informants account for about 10% of the total. In general, the heads of 'B' grade households will be quite senior people but not at the very top of their profession or business. They are quite well-off, but their style of life is generally respectable rather than rich or luxurious. Non-earners will be living on private pensions or on fairly modest private means.

Grade 'C1' Households: the lower middle class

Grade 'C1' constitutes about 24% of total informants. In general it is made up of the families of small tradespeople and non-manual workers who carry out less important administrative, supervisory and clerical jobs, i.e. what are sometimes called 'white-collar' workers.

Grade 'C2' Households: the skilled working class

Grade 'C2' consists in the main of skilled manual workers and their families. It constitutes about 30% of informants. When in doubt as to whether the head of the household is skilled or unskilled, check whether s/he has served an apprenticeship; this may be a guide, though not all skilled workers have served an apprenticeship.

Grade 'D' Households: the semi-skilled and unskilled working class

Grade 'D' consists entirely of manual workers, generally semi-skilled or unskilled. This grade accounts for 25% of families. It also includes non-earners: retired people who before retirement would have been in 'D' Grade and have pensions other than State Pensions, or have other private means.

Grade 'E' Households: those at lowest levels of subsistence

Grade 'E' consists of old age pensioners, widows, and their families, casual workers and those who, through sickness or unemployment, are dependent on social security schemes. They constitute about 8% of all informants.

Regions

Greater London:	Outer and Inner London Boroughs.
South-East:	Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey, West Sussex.
South-West:	Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire.
East Anglia:	Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk.
East Midlands:	Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire.
West Midlands:	Hereford and Worcester, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands.
North-West:	Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside.
Yorkshire/Humberside:	Humberside, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire.
The North:	Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear.
Northern Ireland:	All Counties.
Scotland:	All Counties.
Wales:	All Counties.

Analysis of weighted and unweighted samples

Sex, age, social grade

Base: all adults	17 and over				16-54			
	Unweighted		Weighted		Unweighted		Weighted	
Total	4,666	100%	4,673	100%	3,243	100%	3,255	100%
Sex								
Men	2,224	48	2,270	49	1,583	49	1,604	49
Women	2,442	52	2,403	51	1,660	51	1,650	51
Age								
17-19/16-19	256	5	257	5	345	11	339	10
20-24	473	10	456	10	473	15	456	14
25-34	880	19	880	19	880	27	880	27
35-44	846	18	848	18	846	26	848	26
45-54	699	15	732	16	699	22	732	22
55-64	562	12	564	12				
65-74	581	12	603	13				
75+	369	8	333	7				
Social grade								
AB	821	18	963	21	546	17	642	20
C1	1,376	29	1,262	27	1,008	31	914	28
C2	1,056	23	1,089	23	742	23	769	24
DE	1,411	30	1,358	29	945	29	929	29

Analysis of sample: Region

Base: all adults	17 and over				16-54			
	Unweighted		Weighted		Unweighted		Weighted	
Total	4,666	100%	4,673	100%	3,243	100%	3,255	100%
London	525	11	582	12	360	11	405	12
South-East	721	15	863	18	506	16	606	19
South West	349	7	390	8	229	7	255	8
East Anglia	180	4	167	4	124	4	113	3
East Midlands	346	7	324	7	239	7	225	7
West Midlands	316	7	421	9	234	7	312	10
North-West	384	8	506	11	252	8	334	10
Yorkshire	301	6	402	9	220	7	297	9
North	245	5	248	5	173	5	177	5
England	3,367	72	3,903	84	2,337	72	2,725	84
Northern Ireland	511	11	122	3	356	11	84	>1
Scotland	434	9	414	9	296	9	280	9
Wales	354	8	234	5	254	8	166	5

The questionnaire

ASK ALL:

This card describes the sort of learning that people might do. Could you read the card please while I go through it with you. As the card says:

'Learning can mean practising, studying, or reading about something. It can also mean being taught, instructed or coached. This is so you can develop skills, knowledge, abilities or understanding of something. Learning can also be called education or training. You can do it regularly (each day or month) or you can do it for a short period of time. It can be full time or part time, done at home, at work, or in another place like college. Learning does not have to lead to a qualification. We are interested in any learning you have done, whether or not it was finished'

(SHOW CARD X)

511: Which of the following statements most applies to you (**Read out and mark ONE answer only**)
1. You are currently doing some learning activity now
2. You have done some learning activity in the last 3 years
3. You have studied/learnt but it was over 3 years ago
4. You have not studied/learnt since you left full time education

If learning now or within the past 3 years ask Qs 512-540: Others skip to Q541

512: What are you learning about/have you most recently learned about?
Probe: By that I include writing skills, reading and basic maths?
(**Mark all mentioned in 1st column below**)
If more than one:
What is/was the main subject? (**Mark ONE answer only in 2nd column below**)

	All	*Main*
Accountancy	1	1
Basic reading/writing/literacy	2	2
Basic maths/numeracy	3	3
Building trades	4	4
Business/admin./management	5	5
Car maintenance	6	6
Carpentry/DIY	7	7
Computer studies	8	8
Cookery/catering	9	9
Dance	0	0
Dressmaking/tailoring/needlework	1	1
English as a second language	2	2

English as a foreign language	3	3
English language/literature	4	4
Engineering (electronic/mechanical/construction)	5	5
Foreign languages	6	6
Gardening/horticulture	7	7
Handicrafts	8	8
Law	9	9
Local history/history	0	0
Music	1	1
Nursing/first aid/health studies	2	2
Painting/pottery/sculpture/design	3	3
Photography	4	4
Religion/Bible studies/theology	5	5
Science/maths/statistics	6	6
Shorthand/typing/office training	7	7
Social sciences	8	8
Social work/social services/community care	9	9
Sports/gymnastics/keep fit	0	0
Other professional qualifications (Write in)	8	8
Other vocational qualifications (Write in)	9	9
Other academic subjects (Write in)	0	0
Other 'leisure' subjects (Write in)	X	X
Don't know/can't remember	V	V

Interviewer: Underline the main learning subject and ask the following questions specifically about this.

520: Have you tried to learn anything (else) in the last 3 years, or tried to teach yourself anything? This could be at home, with friends, at work or in a club.
If so, what subjects?

1. Yes (**and write in subjects below**)

_____

_____

2. No
3. Don't know/can't say

522: Taking the main subject you are learning about now/in the last 3 years. How did you find out about it? (**Do NOT prompt. Mark all mentioned**)

1 Friends/relatives/work mates
2 Printed publicity (posters/leaflets etc.) delivered to home
3 Printed publicity (posters/leaflets etc.) elsewhere
4 Newspaper adverts
5 FE/Technical College
6 Evening Institute/Adult Education Centre
7 University or College of Higher Education
8 Community Centre
9 WEA
0 School

1 Library
2 TEC (Training Enterprise Council)/LEC
3 Voluntary organisation
4 Work/employer/training officer
5 Careers Centre/guidance service
6 Job Centre
7 Town Hall/Council Offices

8 CABx/Advice Centres
9 Local radio
0 Television
X Other
V Don't know/can't remember

524: On this card there are some reasons people have given for why they choose to learn about a certain subject or skill. Thinking of your learning of .... (**subject of main learning at Q512**) which of the items on this card best describes the reason you started learning? (**Show CARD 524 and mark ONE answer only**)

1 To get a job
2 To get a job with a different employer
3 To change the type of work I do
4 To gain a promotion
5 To gain a rise in earnings
6 To make my work more satisfying
7 To help me get onto a future course of learning
8 To develop myself as a person
9 To get a recognised qualification
0 To help in my current job

1 I enjoy learning and study
2 Interested in the subject
3 To meet people
4 Had no choice – employer chose
5 Had no choice – benefit requirement
6 Only type of learning available
X Other (**Write in**)
_____

526: What is/was the main place where you do/did this learning? (**Prompt if necessary**)

1 Where I work
2 Employer's training centre
3 Private training centre
4 Jobcentre or Jobclub
5 Evening Institute/Adult education Centre
6 Further education college/technical college
7 Community Centre
8 Workers' Educational Association
9 Skill Centre
0 Trade Union
X Women's Institute/Townswomen's Guild

1 University/College of Higher Education/Open University
2 With an informal group e.g. women's group/church
3 Voluntary organisation e.g. Pre School Alliance
4 At home – structured correspondence course or open learning
5 At home – informal learning
6 At home – from TV/radio
7 Other educational institution
X Other (**Write in**)
_____

528: Thinking about your main subject, about how long have you been learning/studying this?
1 Less than 1 week
2 1 week – 1 month
3 Over 1 – 3 months
4 Over 3 – 6 months
5 7 – 12 months
6 Over 1 -2 years
7 Over 2 years
V Don't know/can't remember

529: Thinking about your main subject, about how many hours a week do you spend on learning/studying?
_____ hours (**Write in**)
V Don't know

531: What qualifications if any are (were) you aiming towards?
1 None/not aiming for qualification
2 GCSE
3 A Level, AS Level, S Level
4 YTS Certificate
5 RSA/Pitmans
6 City and Guilds
7 National or general BTEC, ONC or OND
8 NVQ/SVQ Level 1 or equivalent
9 NVQ/SVQ Level 2 or equivalent
0 NVQ/SVQ Level 3 or equivalent

1 NVQ/SVQ Level 4 or equivalent
2 GNVQ/GSVQ Level 1 or equivalent
3 GNVQ/GSVQ Level 2 or equivalent
4 GNVQ/GSVQ Level 3 or equivalent
5 GNVQ/GSVQ Level 4 or equivalent
6 Higher BTEC, HND
7 Nursing qualification
8 Teaching qualification
9 Degree
0 Diploma
X Higher degree (e.g. PhD)
V Other professional qualification (**Write in**)

533: How far do (did) you have to travel to go to where your learning takes (took) place?
1 No distance; learnt at home/work
2 Up to 1 mile
3 Over 1 – 3 miles
4 4 – 6 miles
5 Over 6 – 10 miles
6 11 – 15 miles
7 Over 15 – 50 miles
8 Over 51 miles
9 Abroad
0 Can't say

534: How long does it take you to get to your place of learning? (**Write in**)
_____ minutes

536: Did you complete your learning?
1 Yes, completed
2 No, gave up before end
3 Still studying

If gave up before end: Others skip to Q539

537: What is it that made you give up before you finished the course? (**Probe fully for answers and mark all mentioned**)
1 Cost/financial pressures
2 Too difficult/level set too high
3 Not demanding enough/level set too low
4 Course was closed down
5 Problems with childcare
6 Pressures of work/job change
7 Pressures of family commitments
8 Poor facilities on course
9 Moved away
0 Lost interest/got bored

1 Course not suitable
2 Learned as much as I wanted
3 Dislike tutor/teacher/other people on course
4 Changed to another course
5 Found I did not have time
6 Health reasons
X Other (Write in)
_____
V Don't know/can't remember

539: Who pays/paid the fees for this learning?
PROBE: Who else? (**Mark all that apply**)
1 No fees
2 Self/family/relative
3 Employer/potential employer paid outside fees
4 Employer funded provision of learning
5 Training for work/ET
6 Training Credit
7 Other government or local authority organisation
8 Charitable trust or other non-government organisation
X Other
V Don't know

540: Sometimes learning can have other costs apart from fees. On this card are some of the costs that people can experience when they do some learning. Thinking about your main learning of (subject/skill), did it lead to any costs like these?
If Yes: Which? **PROBE**: Which others?
(**Show CARD 540 and mark all mentioned**)
1 No other costs
2 Loss of wages/salary
3 Loss of overtime wages
4 Loss of benefit(s)

5 Cost of childcare
6 Travel costs
7 Costs of equipment (e.g. books)
X Other (**Write in**)

_____

ASK ALL:

541: What is the highest level of examination or qualification that you now hold, including any that you may have gained since leaving full time education?

1 Apprenticeship
2 GCSE/O Level/CSE
3 A Levels/Highers, A/S Level/S Level
4 YTS
5 RSA/Pitmans
6 City and Guilds
7 BTEC/First/SCOTVEC
8 ONC/OND/BTEC National
9 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ/SVQ) Level 1
0 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ/SVQ) Level 2

1 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ/SVQ) Level 3
2 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ/SVQ) Level 4
3 Nursing Qualifications
4 Degree
5 Diploma
6 Post Higher Degree (e.g. MA, PhD)
X Other (**Write in**)

_____

543: How old were you when you finished full time education?

1 14 or under
2 15
3 16
4 17
5 18
6 19
7 20
8 21
9 22
0 23
X 24 or above
V Still at school/college/full time student

544: How likely are you to take up any learning in the next 3 years? (Show CARD 544)

1 Very likely
2 Fairly likely
3 Fairly unlikely
4 Very unlikely
5 Don't know

Ask all not saying 'Learning now' at Q511: Others skip to Q547

545: From this list, what, if any, would you say are the main things preventing you from learning these days? (**Show CARD 545 and mark all mentioned**)

1 Not interested / don't want to
2 Cost / money
3 Childcare arrangements / other dependents
4 Transport / too far to travel
5 I don't like being in groups of people I don't know
6 I don't know what is available
7 Work / other time pressures
8 I feel I am too old / too ill / too disabled
9 Worried about being out alone
0 Don't feel anything prevents me

1 Haven't got round to doing it
2 Don't feel colleges / centres are welcoming
3 No suitable courses are available
4 I do not have the qualifications I need
5 I do not have the abilities I need
6 I am too nervous about the idea of starting learning
7 I would not be able to get time off work
8 I've tried to learn in the past and it has been unsuccessful
X Other (**Write in**)

_____

V Don't know

ASK ALL:

547: What (else), if anything, would you be most interested in learning about if you could? (**Do NOT prompt**)

1 Accountancy
2 Basic reading / writing / literacy
3 Basic maths / numeracy
4 Building trades
5 Business / admin / management
6 Car maintenance
7 Carpentry / DIY
8 Computer studies
9 Cookery / catering
0 Dance

1 Dressmaking / tailoring / needlework
2 English as a second language
3 English as a foreign language
4 English language / literature
5 Engineering (electronic / mechanical / construction)
6 Foreign languages
7 Gardening / horticulture
8 Handicrafts
9 Law
0 Local history / history

1 Music
2 Nursing / first aid / health studies
3 Painting / pottery / sculpture / design
4 Photography
5 Religion / Bible studies / theology
6 Science / maths / statistics
7 Shorthand / typing / office training

8 Social sciences
9 Social work / social services / community care
0 Sports gymnastics / keep fit

8 Other professional qualifications (**Write in**)
_____

9 Other vocational qualifications (**Write in**)
_____

0 Other academic subjects (**Write in**)
_____

X Other 'leisure' subjects (**Write in**)
_____

V Don't know / can't remember

551: I will now read out a list of statements people have made about different types of learning. For each one, please tell me, from this card, how much you agree or disagree. (**Show CARD 551. Read out each statement in turn and mark an answer for each**)

	Agree strongly	*Agree*	*Neither*	*Disagree*	*Disagree strongly*	*Don't know*
a) People who get training find their jobs are more interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) People who get trained at work end up with better promotion or better pay	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) People should not be expected to learn new skills for their career in their own time	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) There is not enough help and advice available about the different sorts of learning people do	1	2	3	4	5	6
e) Learning is something people do throughout their life	1	2	3	4	5	6
f) I don't see why I should pay for learning that is to do with my job or career	1	2	3	4	5	6
g) I am confident about learning new skills	1	2	3	4	5	6

558: Have you heard of the European Social Fund? **PROBE**: You may have heard of it as ESF?
1 Yes
2 No
If Yes:

559: What do you think the European Social Fund does? (**Write in fully**)
_____
_____

561: Which of the following statements, if any, applies to your recent or current situation? (**Show CARD 561 and mark all mentioned**)

1 I have started a family
2 I have lost my job
3 I have taken up early retirement
4 I have been involved in a broken marriage / broken up with my partner
5 I have moved home / away
6 I wanted promotion at work
7 I wanted to help my children learn
8 I had an illness
V None of the above

562: People of different cultural backgrounds are likely to have different needs in relation to studying and learning. With this in mind, can you tell me which of these best describes you? (**Show CARD 562**)

1 White
2 Black – Caribbean
3 Black – African
4 Black – Other (Write in)
_____
5 Arab
6 Bangladeshi
7 Chinese
8 Cypriot
9 Indian
0 Pakistani
X Other (Write in)
_____
V Refused
R Don't know

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THE LEARNING DIVIDE

a study of participation in adult learning in the United Kingdom

NAOMI SARGANT
with
JOHN FIELD HYWEL FRANCIS TOM SCHULLER ALAN TUCKETT

The learning divide reports on a survey funded by the Department for Education and Employment, which was carried out for NIACE by the Gallup Organisation in early 1996.

The survey highlights the full scale of the challenge which the UK faces in involving all its people in the learning society, and shows that the learning divide between the learning-rich and the learning-poor is growing.

It shows that:

- three in five of all adults have not taken part in adult learning in the last three years;
- more men than women are currently learning or have been recent learners;
- age is a barrier to participation;
- social class continues to be the key discriminator in participation;
- adults who are not in work have almost half the levels of participation as those in work or seeking work;
- length of initial education is still the best single predictor of participation in adult learning;
- there are major national and regional variations.

The report includes the first full study of participation in Northern Ireland, and with national studies of Scotland and Wales, gives the most comprehensive coverage of the United Kingdom.

THE LEARNING DIVIDE is packed with interesting information, and will be important to practitioners, researchers, education activists and policy-makers.

Naomi Sargant is Visiting Professor at the Open University and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at NIACE. She has published [illegible] on participation in adult learning over the last 20 years.

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Tom Schuller is Professor of Continuing Education at the University of Edinburgh.

Alan Tuckett is Director of NIACE.

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NIACE's website on the Internet is http://www.niace.org.uk

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